Over four decades ago, Yoshihiro Tatsumi expanded the horizons of comics storytelling by using the visual language of *manga* to tell gritty, literary short stories about the private lives of everyday people. He has been called "the grandfather of Japanese alternative comics" and has influenced generations of cartoonists, but, until now, the majority of his work has remained unavailable outside of Japan. By turns poetic, comical, and deeply unsettling, *Abandon the Old in Tokyo* is a collection of unforgettable short stories from a modern master.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY KOJI SUZUKI
(author of RING and DARK WATER)

"Starkly beautiful...revelatory...fearless." — *The Village Voice*

"Marvelously evocative...Tatsumi's stories flow with dreamlike ambiguity."
— *Publishers Weekly*

"With both fascination and empathy, Tatsumi explores the lives of people on society's bottom rung and exposes a world of lost souls, unattainable dreams, and unexpected redemption." — *Bookforum*

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DRAWN & QUARTERLY PUBLICATIONS

YOSHIHIRO TATSUMI

1970

ABANDON THE OLD IN TOKYO

D&Q

YOSHIHIRO TATSUMI

ABANDON THE OLD IN TOKYO

stories

Scanner, Editor: Dille
www.illuminati-manga.com
#illuminati-manga@irc:irchighway.net
- -
Its Read Left to Right
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
If you liked it, buy it!

ABANDON THE OLD IN TOKYO

INTRODUCTION by KOJI SUZUKI

Abandon the Old in Tokyo is a nostalgic book. This may have some readers confused. We often think of nostalgia as a charming and generally positive feeling. Ice cream and the beach are nostalgic things, as are home cooking or the smell of babies. Like these things, Yoshihiro Tatsumi's stories are nostalgic because they are real. They are nostalgic because while they recall the past, they represent an uncanny timelessness. We remember our summers at the beach, and getting sand in our hair; eating more ice cream than we ought to have. We remember Mom's cooking and we lose ourselves in the innocence of a fresh baby's powdery smell. But all of these things still exist, and will forever be. They are not simply memories, they are the evidence of our humanity. That the subjects of nostalgia may be ridden with mischief, crime and passion, as they are in these stories, does not make the subjects any less nostalgic.

I was surprised to learn of the recent English publication of Tatsumi's previous book, *The Push Man and Other Stories*, since Tatsumi's work was not something I was familiar with even in its original Japanese form. The sensibilities evoked by the art and the stories told in the dialogue are specific to Japan in the 1970s. Disillusioned and disobedient civilians were stunned and simultaneously frustrated with the pace of postwar modernization. We wanted change but were scared of it, too. The literal push–man was a newborn agent of the new metropolis, as were the duplicitous madame and perverted film–projectionist. How was it that North American readers understood the perversions of such an ugly subset of a foreign people, when those very people couldn't understand it themselves; especially when the author was a kind of recluse with no real celebrity?

Tatsumi's fans are growing in rank here and abroad now. This is because no one does the minor villains and petty villainies of everyday life like him. His characters may be bad, or even evil, but they're never "Evil" with a capital "E." Tatsumi has a knack for presenting off–beat sexual impulses in such a way that they seem utterly—and depressingly—normal. They probably are, too. This sickly veneer on the Japanese modernism finally reminds us that these very human accidents of the ego are a ceaseless reality. We are struck with an uneasy but gratifying recall. Fortunately, it seems the Westerners have been reminded also.

KOJI SUZUKI is the bestselling author of the *Ring* trilogy (*Ring*, *Spiral*, *Loop*), as well as *Dark Water* and *Birthday* (all published in America by Vertical, Inc.). His stories have been the basis for several blockbuster films in both Japan and the United States. He lives in Tokyo.

YOSHIHIRO TATSUMI

ABANDON THE OLD IN TOKYO

DRAWN & QUARTERLY PUBLICATIONS

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Eel 183

OCCUPIED

I HADN'T BEEN FEELING WELL..... TOO MUCH WORK.

TOILET

I WAS DIZZY AND NAUSEOUS. MY STOMACH WAS A MESS.

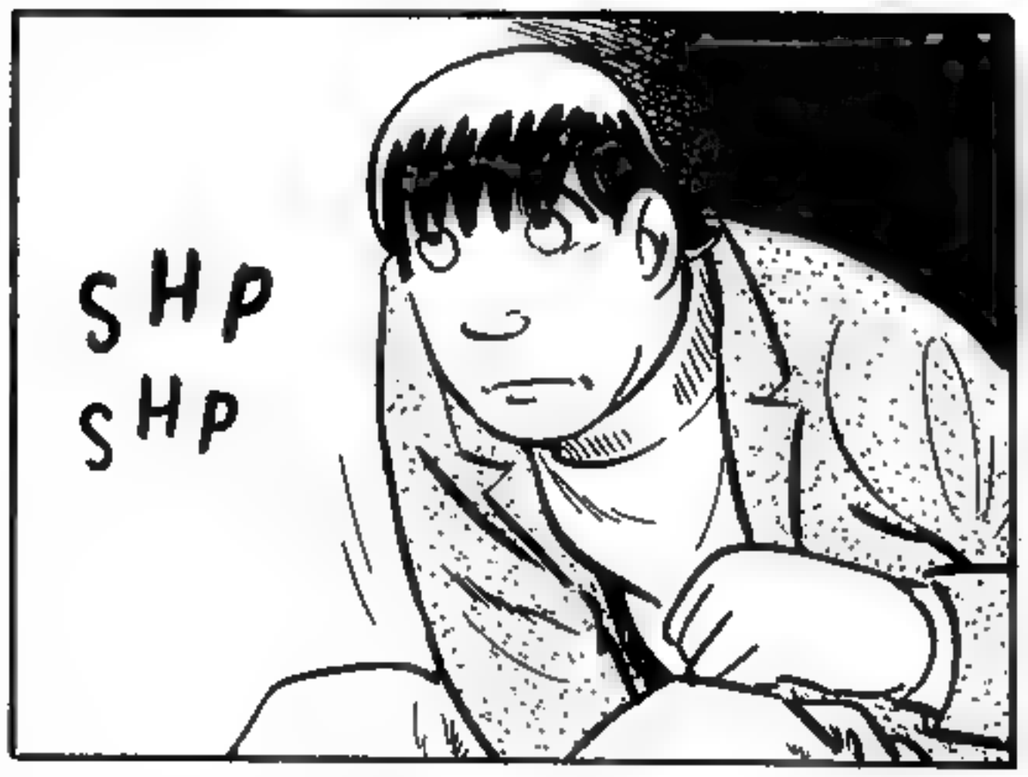
DOOR: OCCUPIED

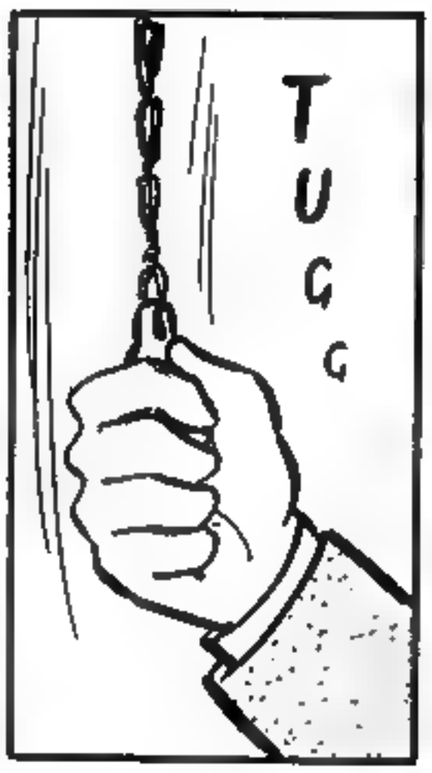
THE LAST FEW DAYS HAD BEEN REALLY BAD. I WAS LOSING WEIGHT. EVERY PART OF MY BODY SEEMED TO BE MALFUNCTIONING.

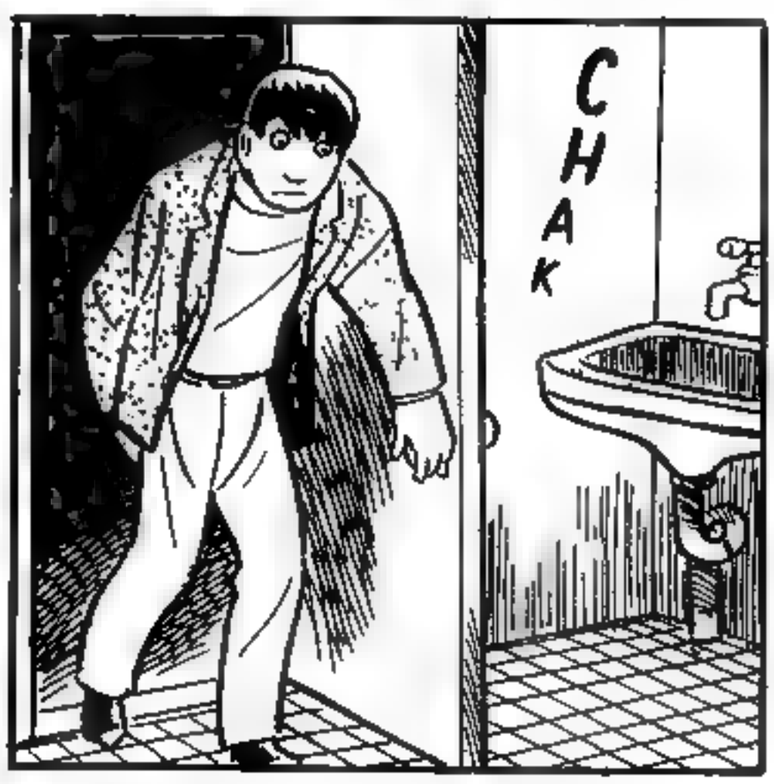
FWISSH

KLAK KLAK

RIP







DOOR: CHILDREN'S BOOKS EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

AS I WAS SAYING... WE CAN'T PUBLISH YOUR WORK ANYMORE.

YOU'RE RANKED AT THE BOTTOM ACCORDING TO OUR READER POLLS.

I WORKED ON THIS SERIAL DAY AND NIGHT...

...TRYING TO ENTERTAIN CHILDREN.

THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM.

YOU'RE LETTING THE KIDS INFLUENCE YOU.

IT SHOULD BE THE OTHER WAY AROUND. THE WRITER HAS TO INFLUENCE THE KIDS.

...

IN ANY CASE, WE NEED YOU TO END THE STORY WITH OUR NEXT ISSUE.

PFFFT

MY HEAD IS SPLITTING.

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

HEE HEE

HA HA HA HA HA

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

DAMN THOSE KIDS... THOSE WELL-FED FAT BRATS...

I WANT MY HEALTH BACK!

I SHOULDN'T HAVE FORCED MYSELF TO EAT THEN.

和食堂

RIGHT SIGNS: UDON, CURRY RICE

FSSSH

KLAKETTA KLAKETTA KLAKETTA

KLAKETTA KLAKETTA KLAKETTA KRRRRR KRRRRR KRRRRR KLAKETTA KLAKETTA

UNGH

お手洗
TOILET

改札口
出口

RIGHT SIGN: ENTRANCE

FAR RIGHT SIGN: EXIT

I DIDN'T MAKE IT TO THE TOILET IN TIME.

HAKK

...AND ENDED UP SULLYING THE WALL.

GRAFFITI: SPERM COLLEGE BOY I FUCKED A COLLEGE GIRL

UNGH

HAKK

THE MOMENT I SAW THE OFFENSIVE GRAFFITI...

...I WAS OVERCOME WITH NAUSEA.

NOW THAT THE SERIAL I RELIED ON TO MAKE ENDS MEET HAD BEEN CANCELLED, I WAS OUT OF WORK... I WAS BURNT OUT.

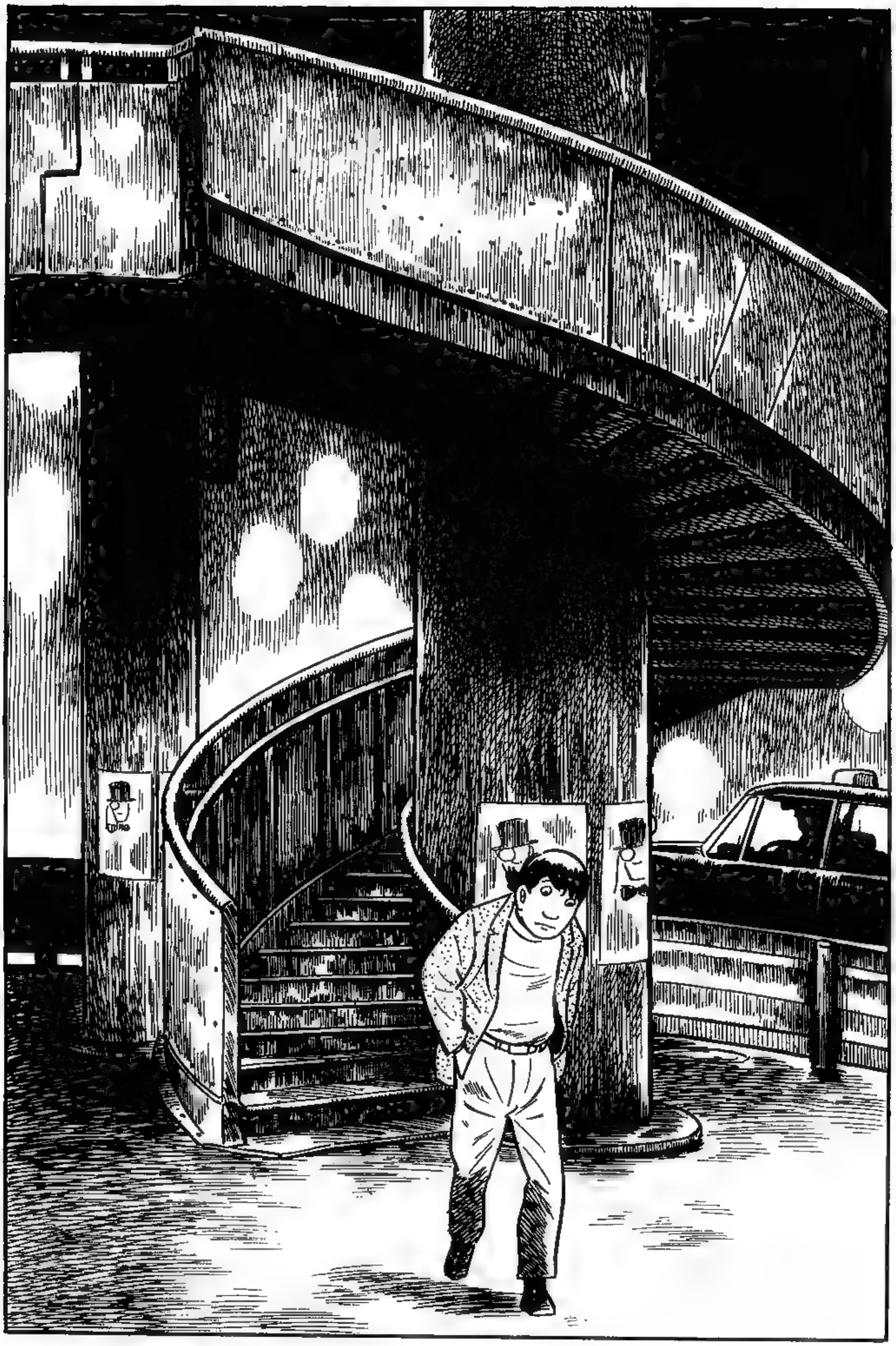
I STAYED IN BED A COUPLE OF DAYS AND STARTED FEELING BETTER.

NOW THEN,,,, I'LL HAVE TO WRAP THIS ONE UP.

A MAN'S GOT TO KNOW WHEN TO CALL IT QUITS... HM HM.

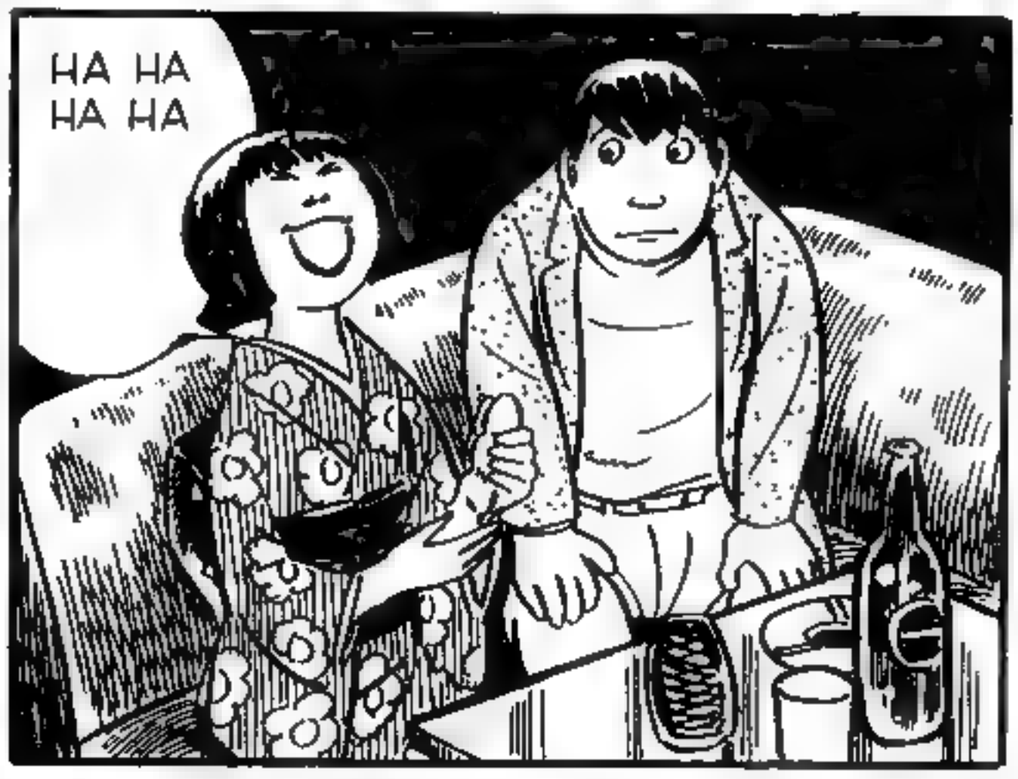
YOU'RE LETTING THE KIDS INFLUENCE YOU.

HA HA HA HA



かっぽ屋
食堂
めし
ホテル
まつし
バーらん
寿

HOW ABOUT IT? I'LL OFFER YOU A SPECIAL DEAL.
BAR
キャッチ


HA HA
HA HA

YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I MEANT, WHEN I ASKED YOU TO WIPE MY FINGERS WITH THE TOWEL?
I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW NAIVE YOU ARE.

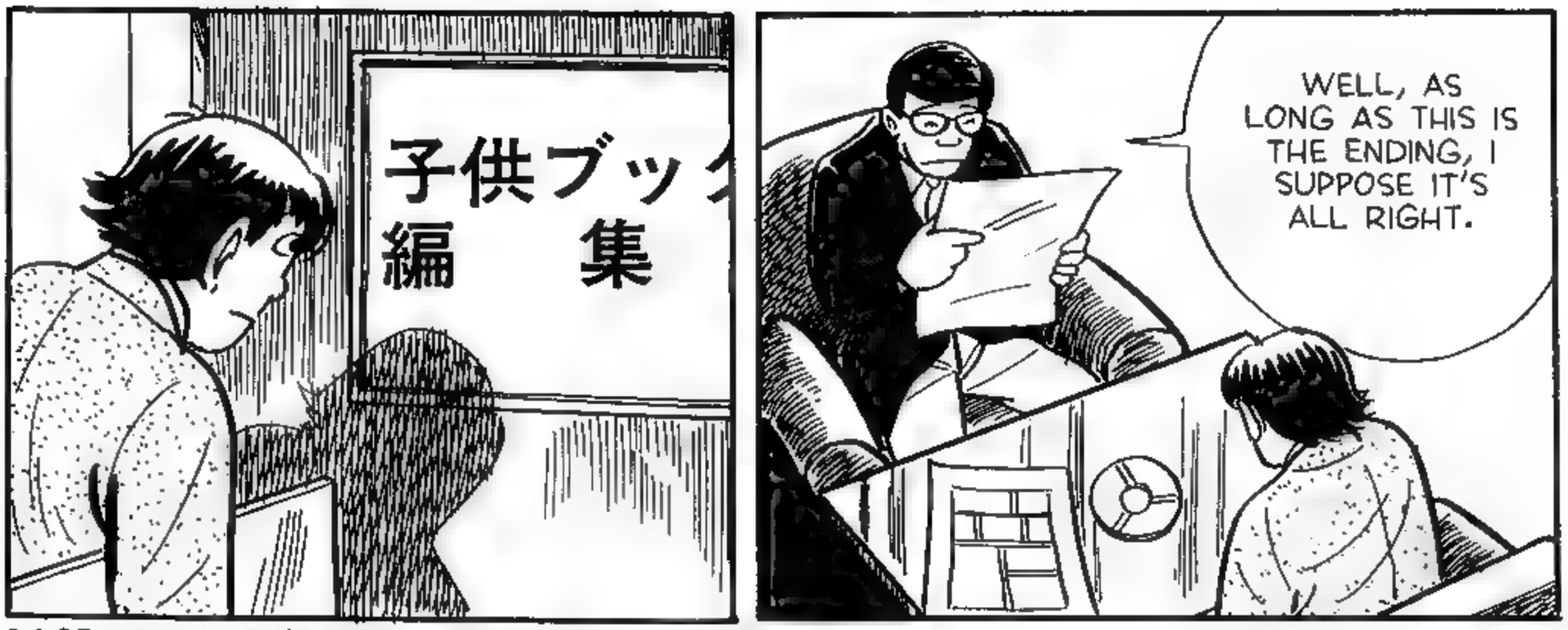
HA HA HA HA.
THEN I'LL WIPE THEM.
EXCUSE ME.
HUH...
MY, OH MY.
IT'S ALREADY SO BIG...
YOU NAUGHTY BOY.
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

IT WAS SIMPLE: SHE GOT ME GOING, TOOK MY MONEY, AND KICKED ME OUT.

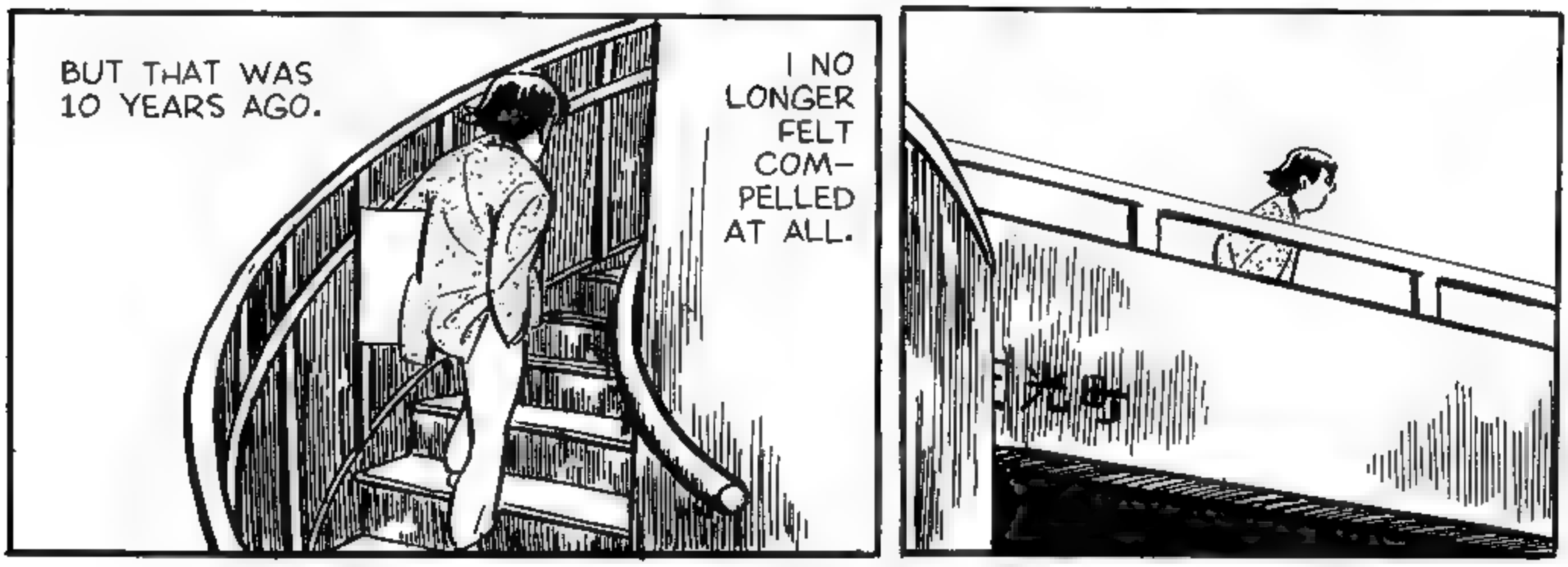
お手洗
TOILET

SUDDENLY, I FELT THE URGE TO SEE IT AGAIN.

ONLY TWO DAYS HAD ELAPSED, BUT THE GRAFFITI HAD COMPLETELY CHANGED.
IT WAS AN ENDLESS CYCLE: THE JANITORS CLEANED THE WALLS, AND PEOPLE KEPT SCRAWLING NEW GRAFFITI.



DOOR: CHILDREN'S BOOKS EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT



NEXT THING I KNEW, I WAS BACK INSIDE THE RESTROOM.

IT WAS MORE OF THE SAME: CRUDE AND EXPLICIT, LIKE ALL GRAFFITI...

I IMAGINED WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO SCRAWL THIS STUFF.

FOR SOME REASON, PEOPLE WERE COMPELLED TO DO IT.

AS I STOOD THERE THINKING ABOUT THIS, I FELT LIKE A PERVERT MYSELF. I COULDN'T HELP BUT LAUGH OUT LOUD.

HA HA HA

TOK TOK

TUNK TUNK

CROWDS OF PEOPLE OUTSIDE... IT WAS QUIET IN THERE. I WAS COMFORTABLE THERE.

MRRR MRRR

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

TUGG

FSSSH

I SAT AT MY DESK, BUT I WAS COMPLETELY UNINSPIRED.

I FELT IMPATIENT.

BUT I WAS ALSO AFRAID TO LEAVE MY DESK.

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO NOW?

DID PEOPLE GO INTO THAT BATHROOM JUST TO PUT GRAFFITI ON THE WALLS, OR DID THEY DO IT WHILE THEY WERE RELIEVING THEMSELVES?

HUH

KRAK

KRSH
KRSH

RRRRRR

KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
KTHUNK
KTHUNK
KTHUNK

THUMP

REMEMBER ME?

SO YOU'RE NOT WORK-ING FOR "CHILDREN'S BOOKS" ANYMORE?
THIS IS PERFECT TIMING.

WE WANT TO PUBLISH YOU IN "RUDE MAGAZINE."
WHY DON'T YOU DRAW SOMETHING FOR US?

BUT... I THOUGHT "RUDE MAGAZINE" WAS AN ADULT MAGAZINE.

THAT'S JUST IT
I DON'T THINK YOU'RE WASHED UP AT ALL... YOU JUST CAN'T KEEP UP WITH KIDS ANYMORE.

COME VISIT US IN AN HOUR.
STOP BY THE OFFICE.

I'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU.

AN ADULT MAGAZINE. HUH...

IT WAS A GENRE I'D NEVER THOUGHT OF.

BUT... THE MOMENT I STARTED THINKING ABOUT IT, A FLOOD OF IMAGES FLASHED THROUGH MY MIND.

I THINK I CAN DO IT! THIS IS WHAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!

IT WAS INVIGORATING... AS IF I'D COME OUT OF A LONG COMA.

LET ME CLEAR YOUR TABLE, SIR.

I WAS INCREDIBLY INSPIRED.

I WAS SO EXCITED I COULDN'T SIT STILL.

I HAD TO DRAW! I HAD TO DRAW! I WAS OVERCOME WITH THE DESIRE TO DRAW.

KLAKETTA KLAKETTA KTHUNK

KLAKETTA KLAKETTA

RRRR

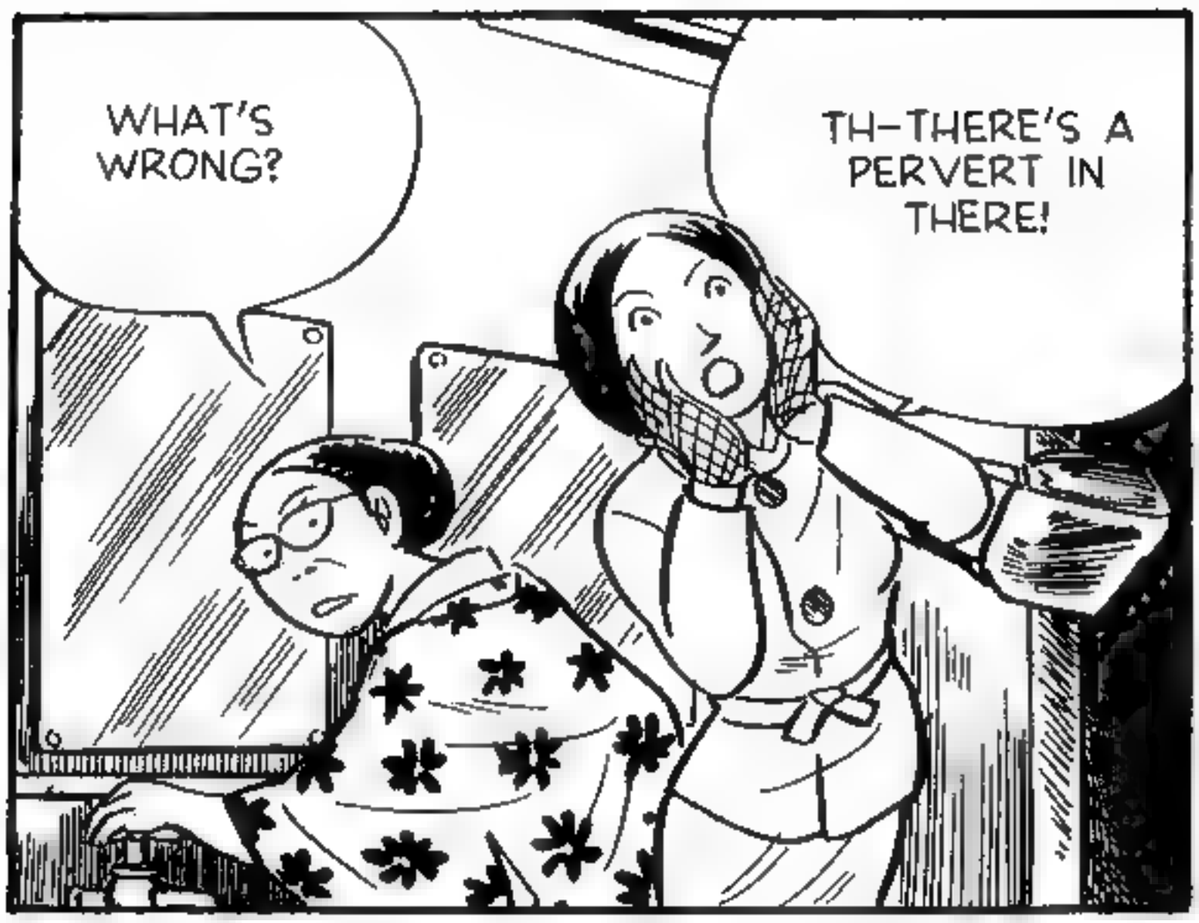
PEN: MAGIC MARKER

THE WALL INSIDE WAS NEARLY SPOTLESS.

THE JANITOR MUST HAVE DONE HIS BEST TO CLEAN IT UP.

KREEK

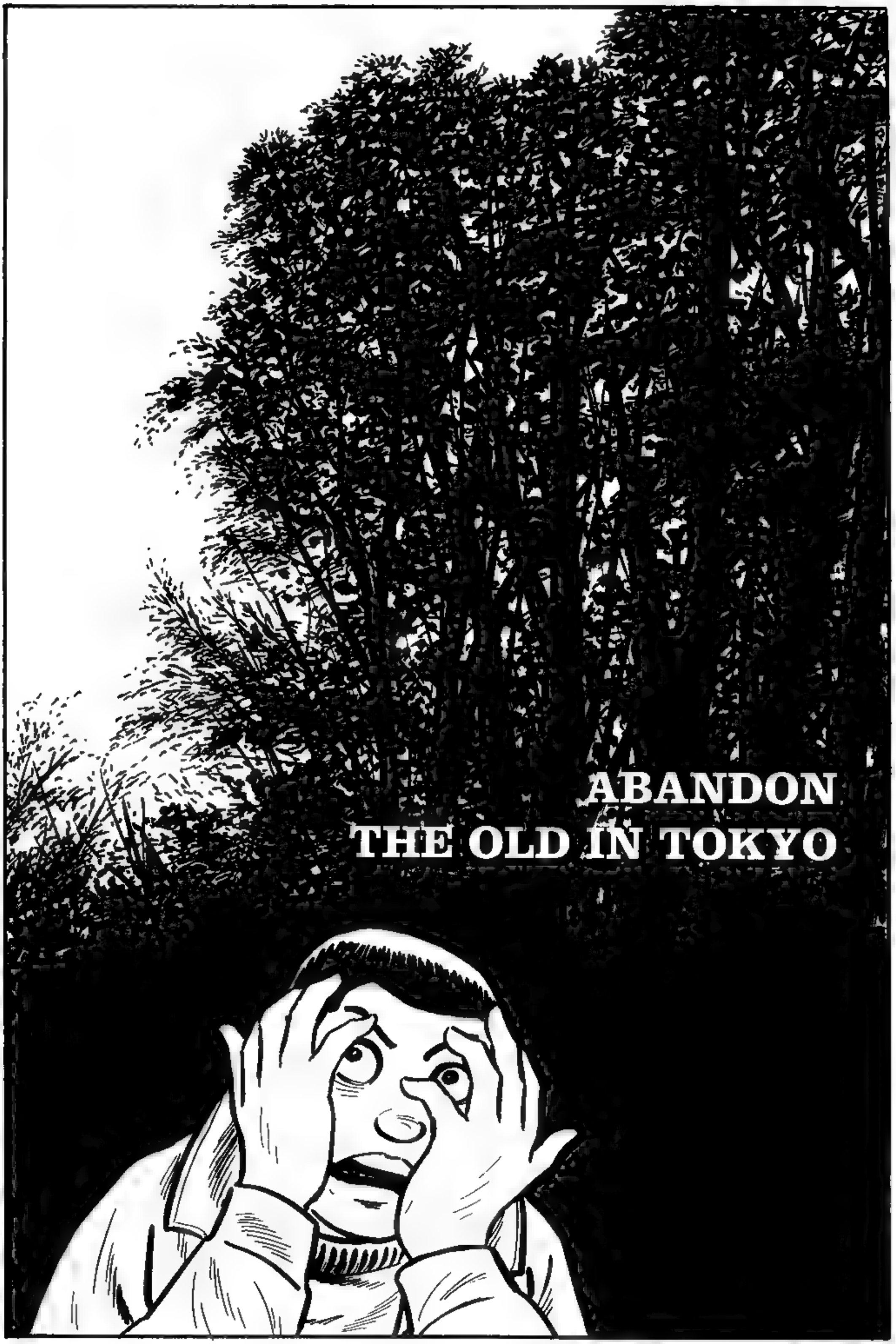
AIEEE-

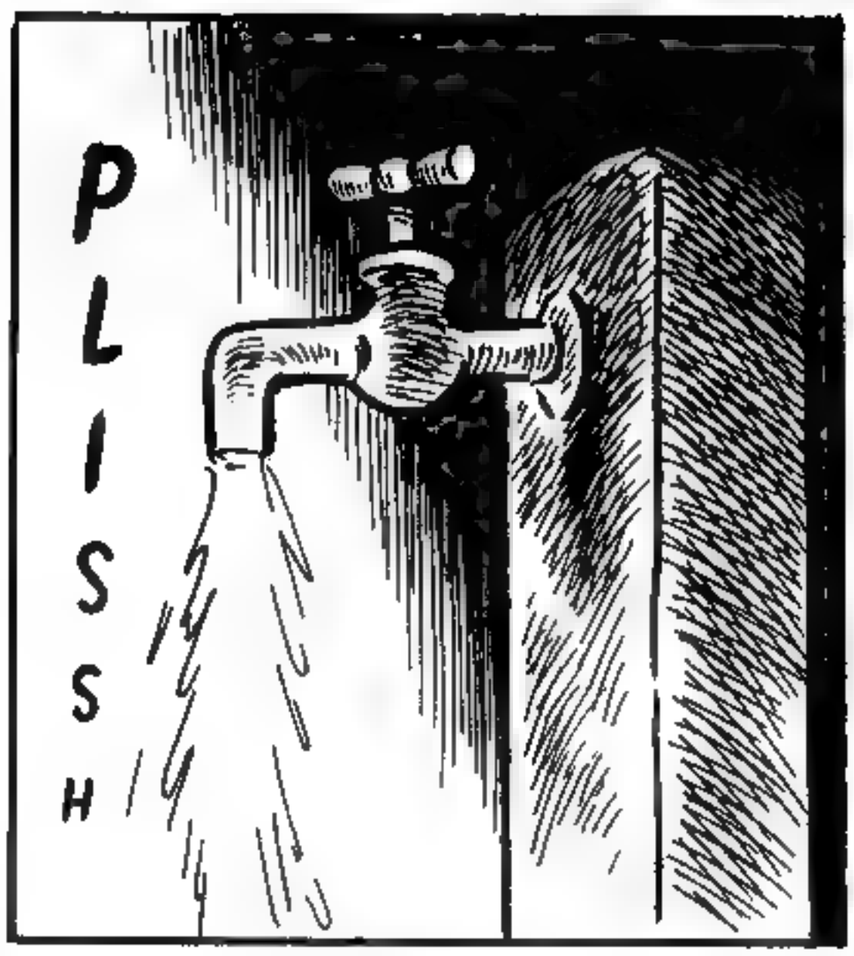

WHAT'S WRONG?
TH-THERE'S A PERVERT IN THERE!

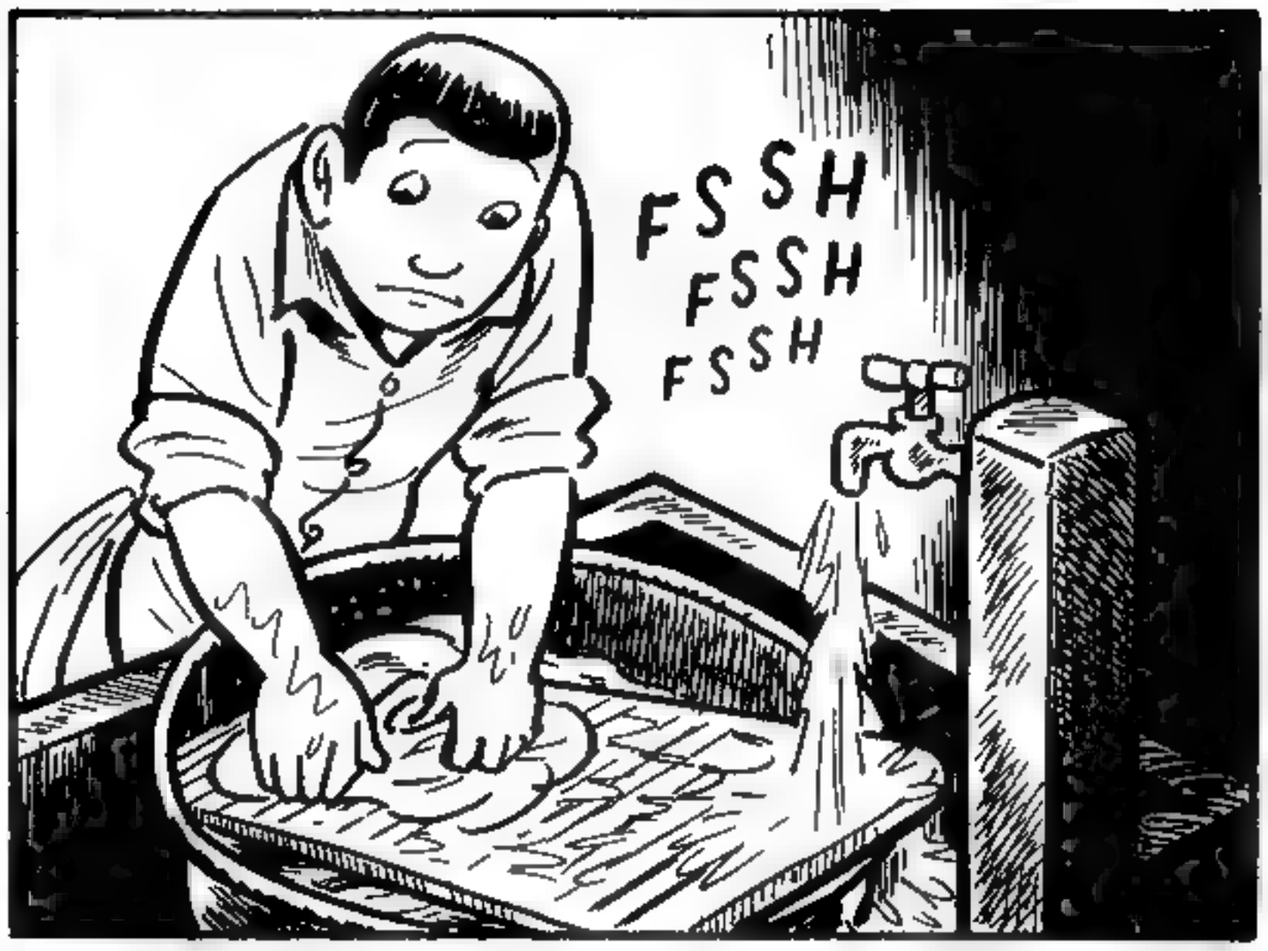
SOMEONE CALL THE POLICE. THERE'S A PERVERT IN THE BATHROOM.

WHAT'S THIS? A PERVERT?
GASP!
お手洗
TOILET

HURRY!
CALL THE COPS!


ABANDON
THE OLD IN TOKYO





PAPER ON WALL: NOTE. KEEP SINK CLEAN. NO NOISE, PLEASE. TURN OFF GAS.

FSSH

FWIP

MR. NAKA-MURA.

PLEASE BE CARE-FUL.

YOU HAVE TO BE MORE CONSIDERATE TOWARDS THE OTHER TENANTS.

JUST BECAUSE EVERYONE HAS THE SAME WATER BILL DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN USE THIS MUCH.

ALSO, YOUR ROOM REALLY STINKS. HAVE YOU BEEN CLEANING IT UP?

KENICHI. KENICHI-

HURRY.

KENICHI-

I PEED AGAIN. IT'S SO UNCOMFORTABLE...

I NEED YOU TO CLEAN IT UP NOW.

UNGH

HURRY.

I WORKED TOO MUCH WHEN I WAS YOUNG.

I KNOW I KEEP ON SAYING THIS...

...BUT I HAD TO WORK REALLY HARD TO RAISE YOU.

AHH... I FEEL MUCH BETTER NOW.

FSSH

OFF TO WORK ALREADY?

WHEN YOU'RE GONE, I FEEL SO LONELY I COULD DIE.

KENICHI... COME HOME EARLY, OKAY?

THUD

K R E E K

作事材石会社
〒
おちょ

KRRRSSH
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK

KRRRRRRRRRR

あなたのセカンドハウス

広大な別荘地

700万(一区画)～1,100万円

○○○土地

SIGN (THIRD PANEL): YOUR SECOND HOME. SPACIOUS VACATION HOME
¥ 7,000,000 – ¥ 11,000,000. XXX PROPERTY

KRRRRRR

WHUDD
KTUNK
THUNK
KTUNK

ALL RIGHT,
ALL RIGHT.

STOP,
STOP!

WHAT'S UP?

THIS'LL COME IN HANDY.

THE OLD LADY'S BEEN WANTING A WASHING MACHINE.

YOU'RE WAY BEHIND THE TIMES. DOESN'T MATTER HOW HANDY IT IS. PEOPLE GET RID OF ANYTHING OLD.

THAT'S MODERN LIFE FOR YA.

BUT ALL IT NEEDS IS A SIMPLE REPAIR...

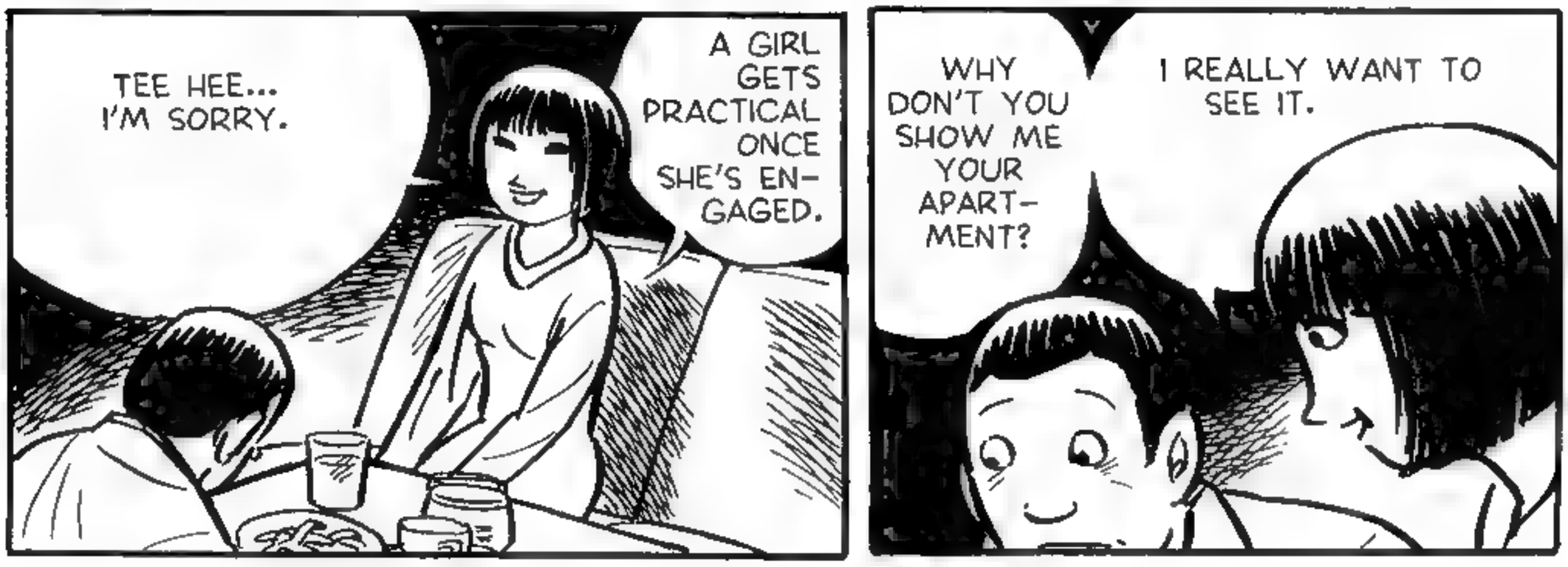
YOU'RE WAY OUT OF TOUCH.

COME ON, LET'S GO.

TRUCK DOOR: MARU-SAN HAULING COMPANY

SIGN: LANDFILL

SIGN: CAFE SACCHAN



I WANT TO SEE HOW A BACHELOR LIVES.

IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY BOYS IN OUR FAMILY...

IT'S A DRAG LIVING WITH MY FATHER.

I CAN'T WAIT TO LIVE WITH YOU.

...

CAN'T I VISIT TONIGHT?

HAKK HAKK

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU.

HOW COULD YOU DRINK TOO MUCH TONIGHT? HEY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

IT'S GETTING LATE. I SHOULD HEAD HOME.

YOU BE CAREFUL GOING HOME.

NEXT TIME, THOUGH, I WANT TO VISIT, OKAY?

HAKK HAKK

...!

TAK TAK

FWEE

I WORK MYSELF TO THE BONE WAY BACK WHEN, AND NOW I STILL HAVE TO PUT UP WITH THIS.

IT'S A HORRIBLE THING, GETTING OLD.

IT WOULD BE NICE TO EAT AT A REASONABLE HOUR.

AFTER YOUR FATHER DIED, I WORKED SO HARD...

...TO PUT FOOD ON THE TABLE FOR YOU.

KLAK

YOU'RE GOING TO BED ALREADY?

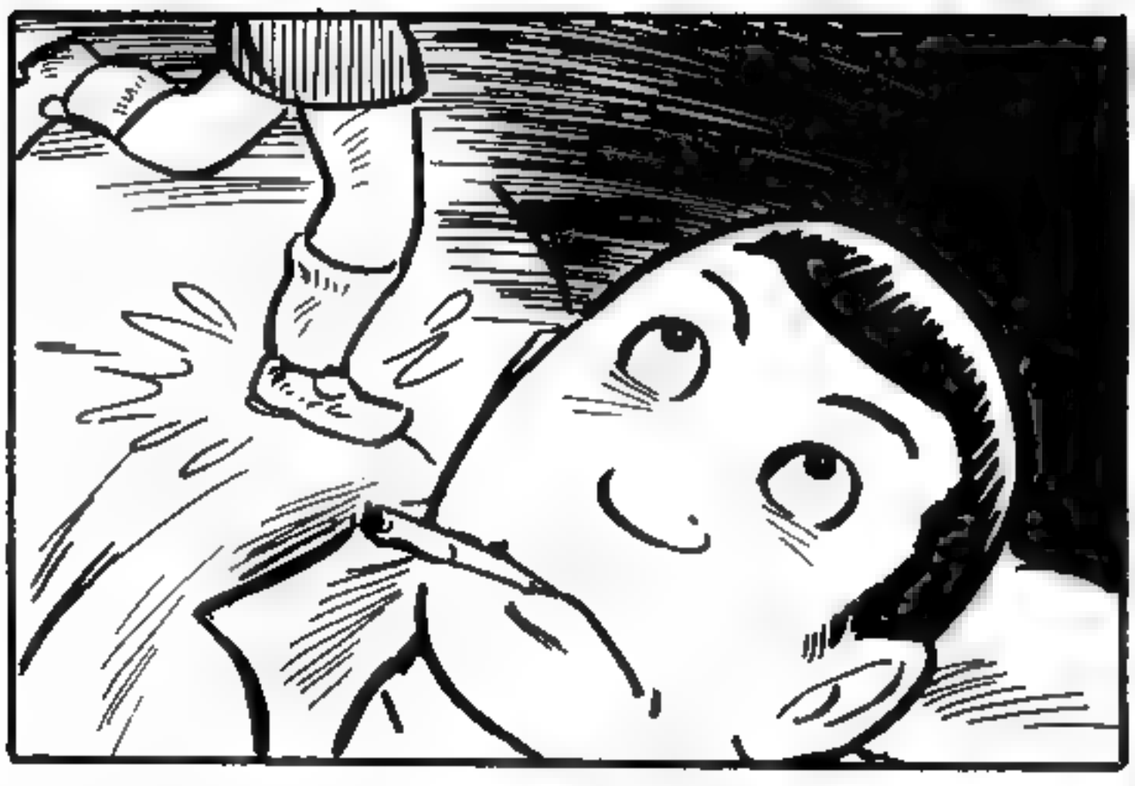
PLIPP

ZZZZZZ

ZZZZ

KLIK

ZZZZZZ



HEY, KEN.

SLIP

LOOKING FOR YOUR MOM? SHE DIDN'T SHOW UP FOR WORK TODAY.

SHE'S NOT AT HOME?
THAT'S ODD.

HAH, I BET SHE'S JUST OUT WITH ONE OF HER CUSTOMERS.
SHH. HE'S JUST A KID.

MNCH MNCH

POOR KID... YOU HAVEN'T HAD A THING TO EAT ALL DAY.

EAT ALL YOU WANT.

ARE YOU SURE, OHARU?

I'M FINE. JUST TAKE ME SOMEWHERE.

KLAK KLAK KLAK

BAR

12
3
6
9

KENICHI, OPEN UP!

KNOCK KNOCK

KNOCK KNOCK

KNOCK KNOCK

WHY WON'T YOU LET YOUR MOTHER IN?

KNOCK KNOCK

THUNK THUNK

I WORK SO HARD FOR YOU AND YOU TURN ME AWAY!

PLIP

ZZZZZ

RRRRR

新聞

都心のアパートで
ひとりぐらしの老人
死んで二週間めに
見つかる

CAPTION: SENIOR CITIZEN DISCOVERED TWO WEEKS AFTER DEATH IN A DOWNTOWN APARTMENT

PEOPLE GET RID OF ANYTHING OLD. THAT'S MODERN LIFE FOR YA.

ZZZZZ

I CAN'T WAIT TO LEAVE HOME.

I CAN'T WAIT TO LIVE WITH YOU.

KOFF KOFF

...

ZZZ ZZZ

NAKA-
MURA.

I GOT THE ADVANCED PAY YOU REQUESTED FROM THE ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT.

WHATEVER IT'S FOR, BE CAREFUL HOW YOU SPEND IT.

SIGN: ASAHI REALTORS

KAW
KAW

IT'S RIGHT HERE. IT'S DOWNTOWN, BUT VERY QUIET.

EVEN CROWS COME HERE.

IT'S THE ROOM IN THE BACK.

YOU'D HAVE YOUR PRIVACY.

YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH NEIGHBORS HERE...

YOU CAN SIGN THE CONTRACT BACK AT THE OFFICE.

SO YOU WANT ME TO MOVE TO AN APARTMENT.

NO! YOU MUST BE CRAZY.

WHY ARE YOU LEAVING THIS APARTMENT?

WHY DO YOU WANT TO LIVE IN THE COMPANY DORM ALL OF A SUDDEN?

YOU KNOW I'M AN INVALID...

I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW UNGRATEFUL YOU ARE, AFTER ALL I'VE DONE.

A-HUH. HUH

THUMP

SIGN: CAFE SACCHAN

SIGN: CAR DISPOSAL STRICTLY PROHIBITED. CITY TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT

SO THE ROOM'S OVER THERE...

VRRROOM

CLIMB SLOWLY.

AHH... I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING TO ME AT THIS AGE.

I GUESS I'M GETTING OLD. I CAN'T BE SO STUBBORN ANYMORE.

K A W

K A W

K A W

KAW
KAW

THIS ROOM IS DEPRESSING.

YOU REALLY BETTER VISIT ME EVERY DAY.

I NEED YOU TO COOK FOR ME TOO. I'M SICK AFTER ALL.

YOU'RE LEAVING ALREADY?

THUMP

F F
S S
H H

YOU'RE TAKING A VACATION?
AND YOU WANT ME TO JOIN YOU?

THIS IS GREAT.

I'M SO GLAD I VISITED TONIGHT.

THE ROOM'S A LITTLE SHABBY, BUT IT'S SO NICE TO HAVE DINNER ALONE WITH MY FIANCE.
IT'S SO NICE.

HEY, CAN I STAY TO-NIGHT?

IS IT ALL RIGHT?

GETTING OUT OF THE HOUSE TONIGHT WASN'T EASY, YOU KNOW.

I'M NEVER GOING TO LET YOU GO NOW.

12

THIS IS SO WONDERFUL.

A PRE-LUDE TO OUR HONEY-MOON.

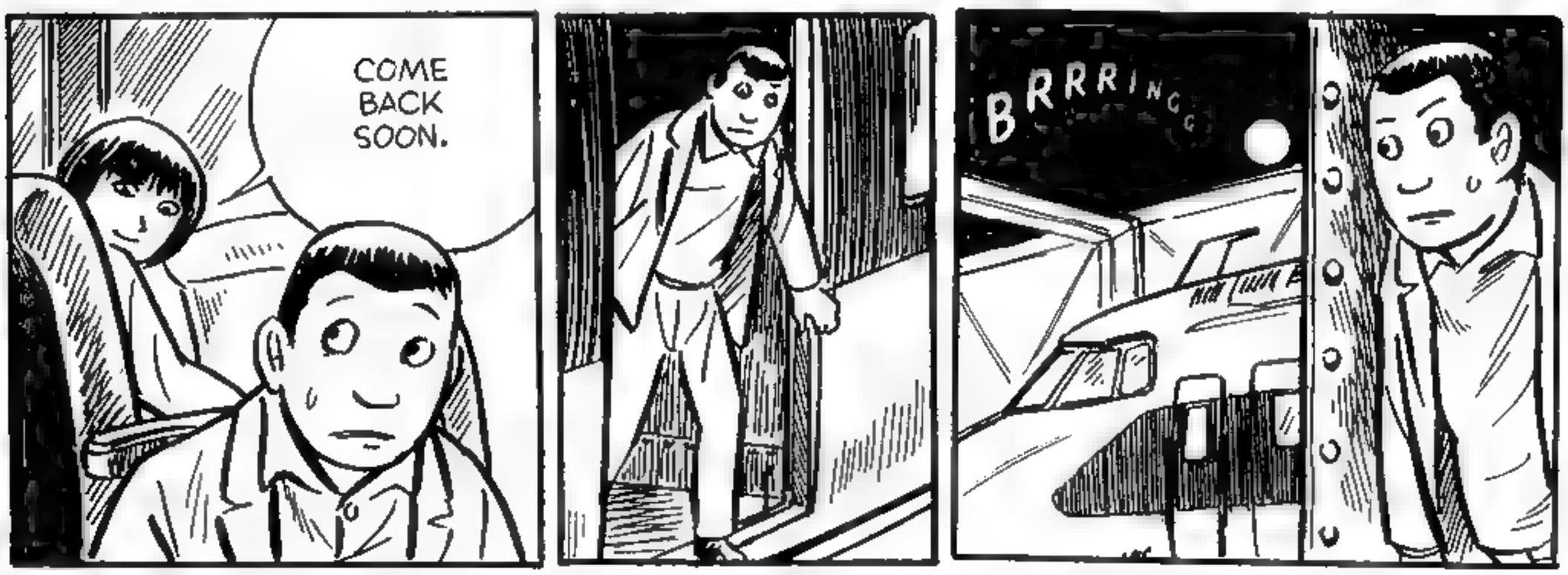
ARE YOU HAPPY, KENICHI?

ARE YOU HAPPY TO BE WITH ME...?

I WORKED REALLY HARD TO CONVINCE MY MOTHER...

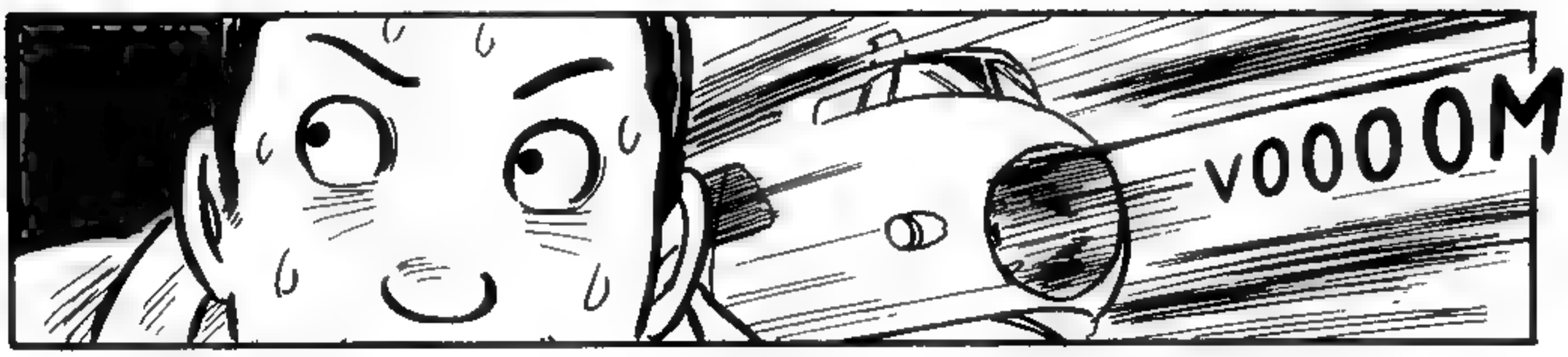
DON'T EVER LEAVE ME.

I'M NEVER GOING TO LET YOU GO.
HEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I'M GOING TO GET SOME TEA.


COME BACK SOON.
BRRRING

RRRRR

KRRRR

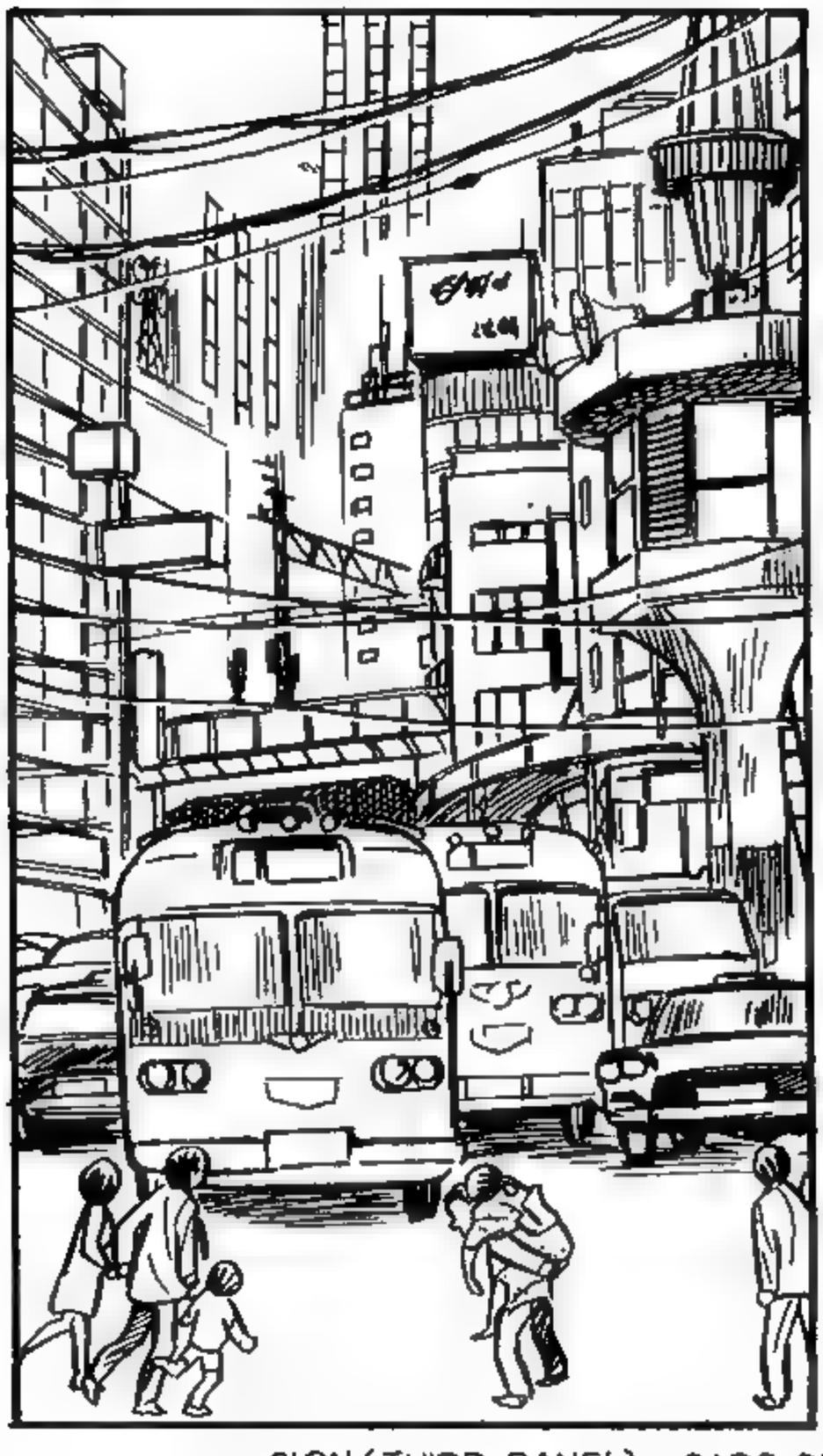

VOOOOM

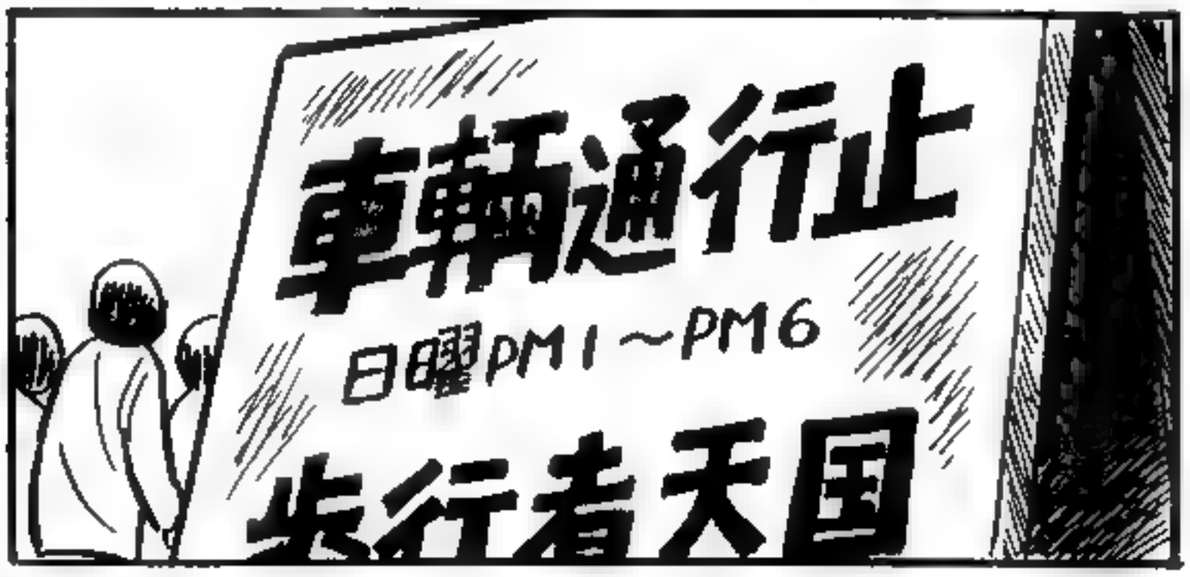
KAW
KAW
KAW

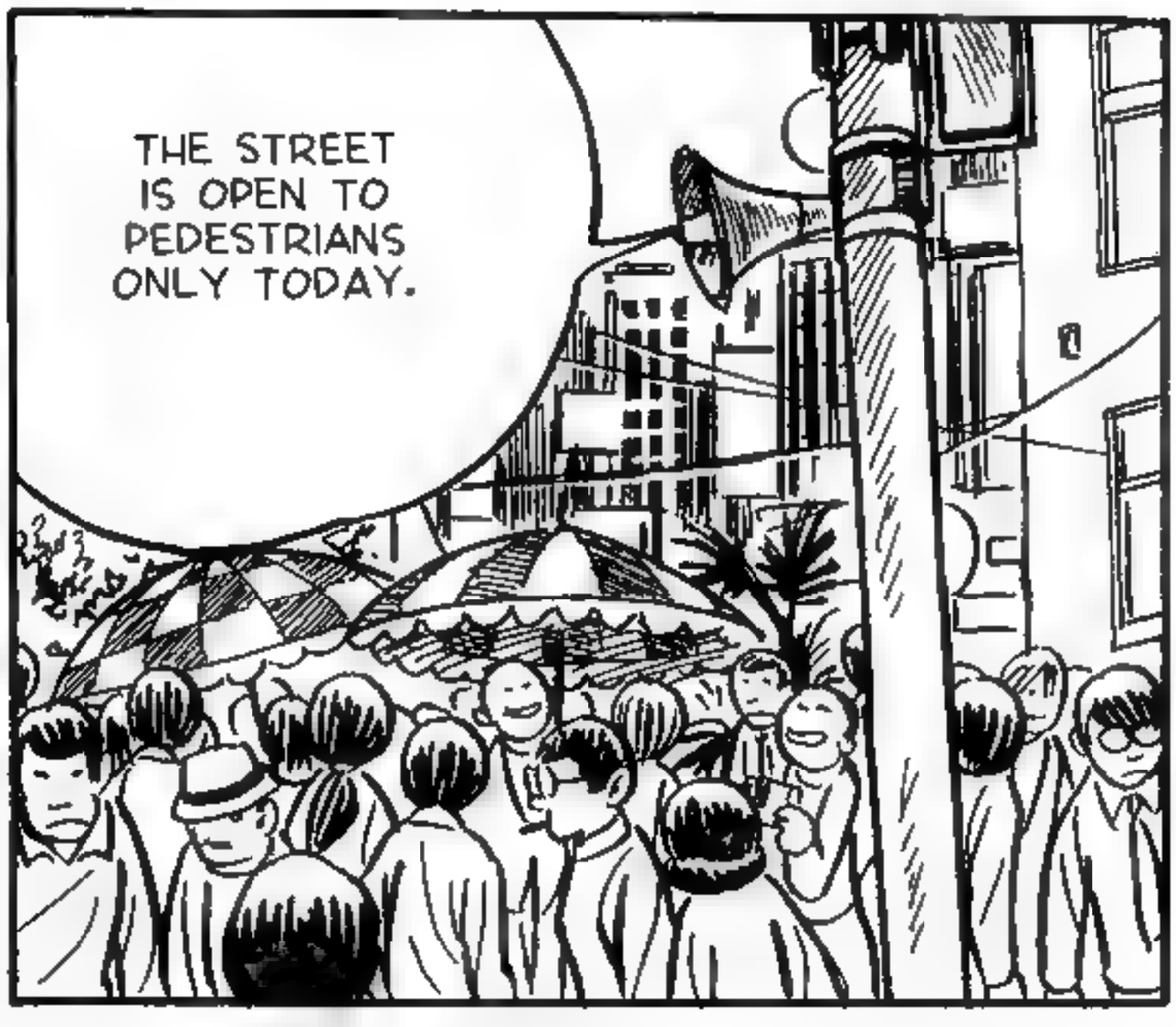
BOTTLE: BROVARIN

MOM, MOM!

AAAAAAHHH







SIGN (THIRD PANEL): CARS PROHIBITED. SUNDAY 1PM–6PM. PEDESTRIAN PARADISE

EXCUSE ME, SIR.

PEDESTRIANS ARE HERE TODAY TO TAKE BACK THE STREETS.

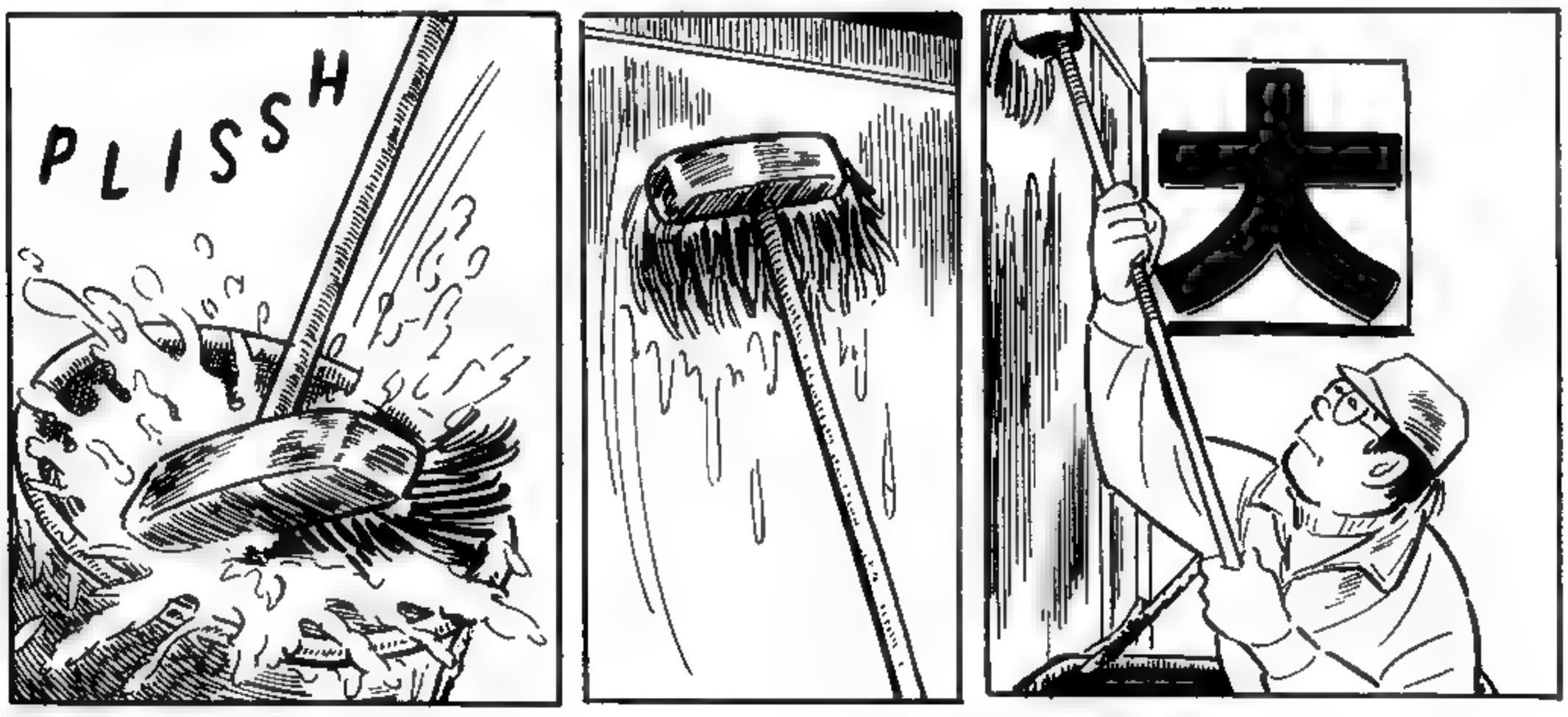
AS A DUTIFUL SON, WOULD YOU CARE TO COMMENT ON THIS?

NHT

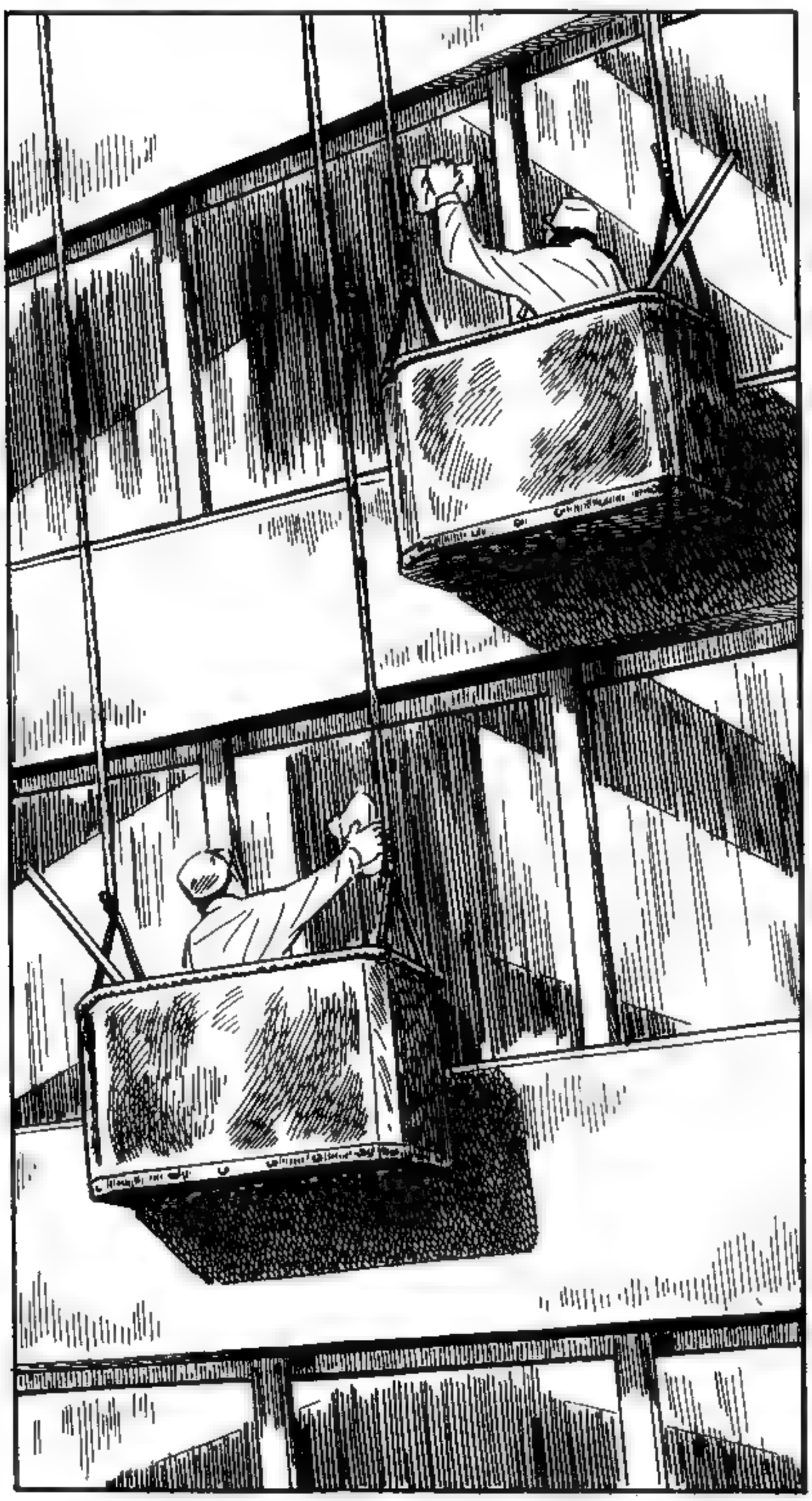
歩行者天国

BANNER: PEDESTRIAN PARADISE

THE WASHER

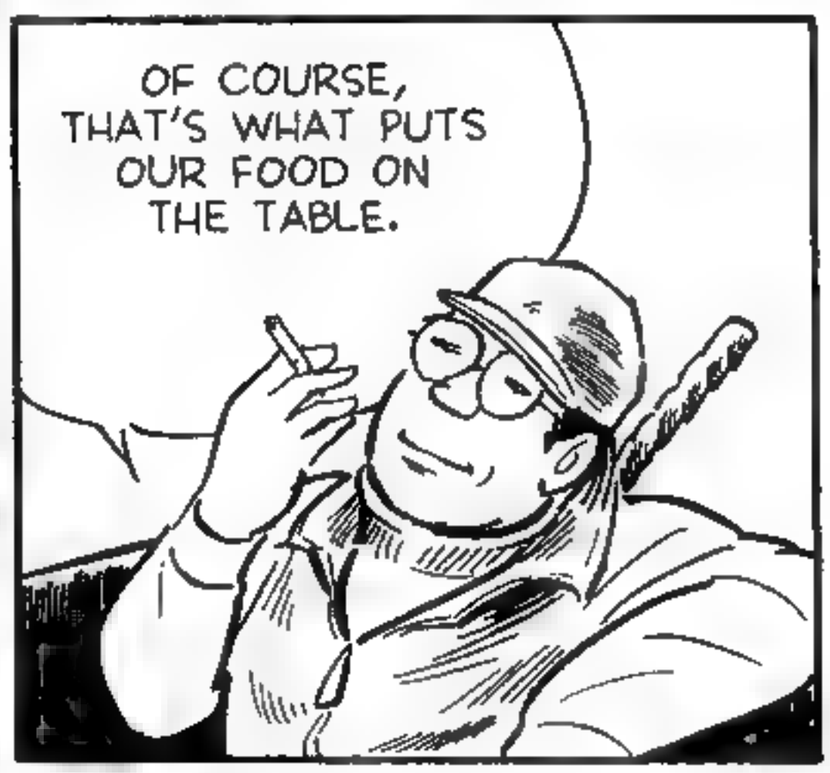

PLISSH

FWIK FWIK



WHEW!

THE SKY IS SO FILTHY.
DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I WIPE THE WINDOWS.


OF COURSE, THAT'S WHAT PUTS OUR FOOD ON THE TABLE.

HEY...
...WHAT DO YOU THINK?
...
ALL RIGHT THEN.

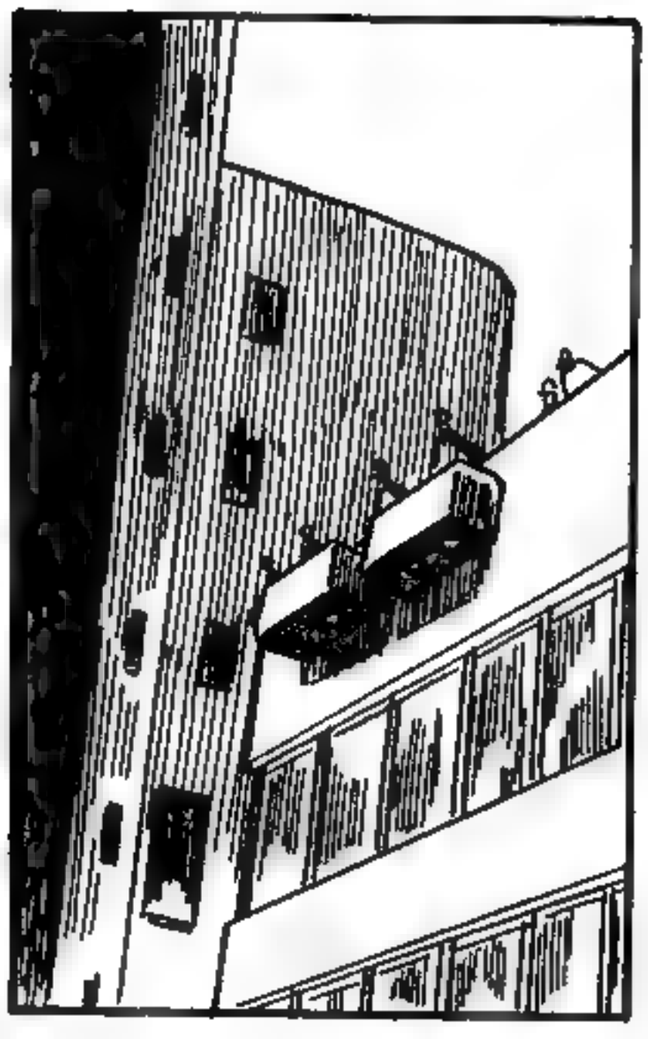
AHH–
HEY...
T U P
T U P
FINALLY GOT YOUR ATTENTION.
COME ON... LET'S GO GET SOME LUNCH.
F S H
F S H
F S H

YOU LOOKED PRETTY SHAKEN UP OVER THERE.
BUT EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT THAT PRES-IDENT'S AFFAIR WITH HIS SECRETARY.

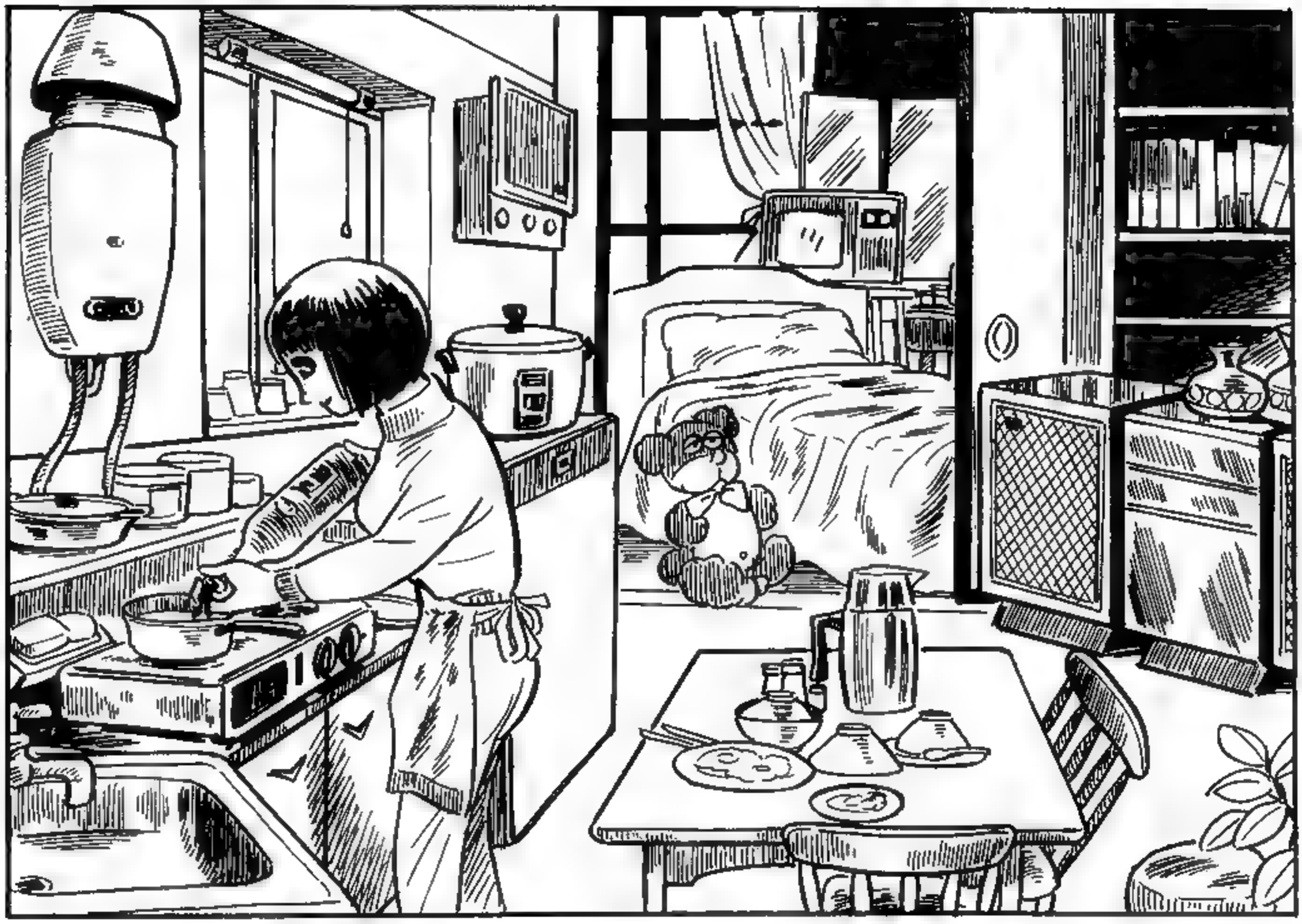
YOU WERE THE ONE WHO TAUGHT US HOW THE WORLD BEHIND THESE WINDOWS IS DIFFERENT.
HOW SOME STAINS JUST CAN'T BE WASHED OFF.
MILK

HEY...DON'T TELL ME YOU HAVE A THING FOR THAT SECRETARY?

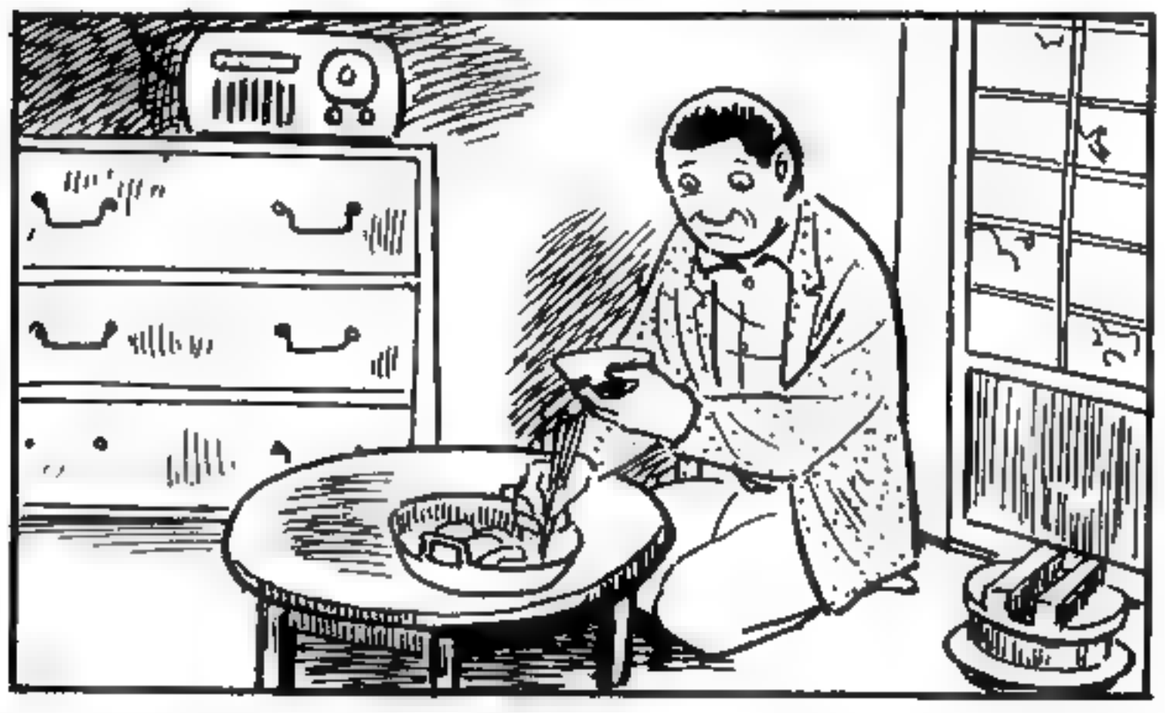
HA HA HA...



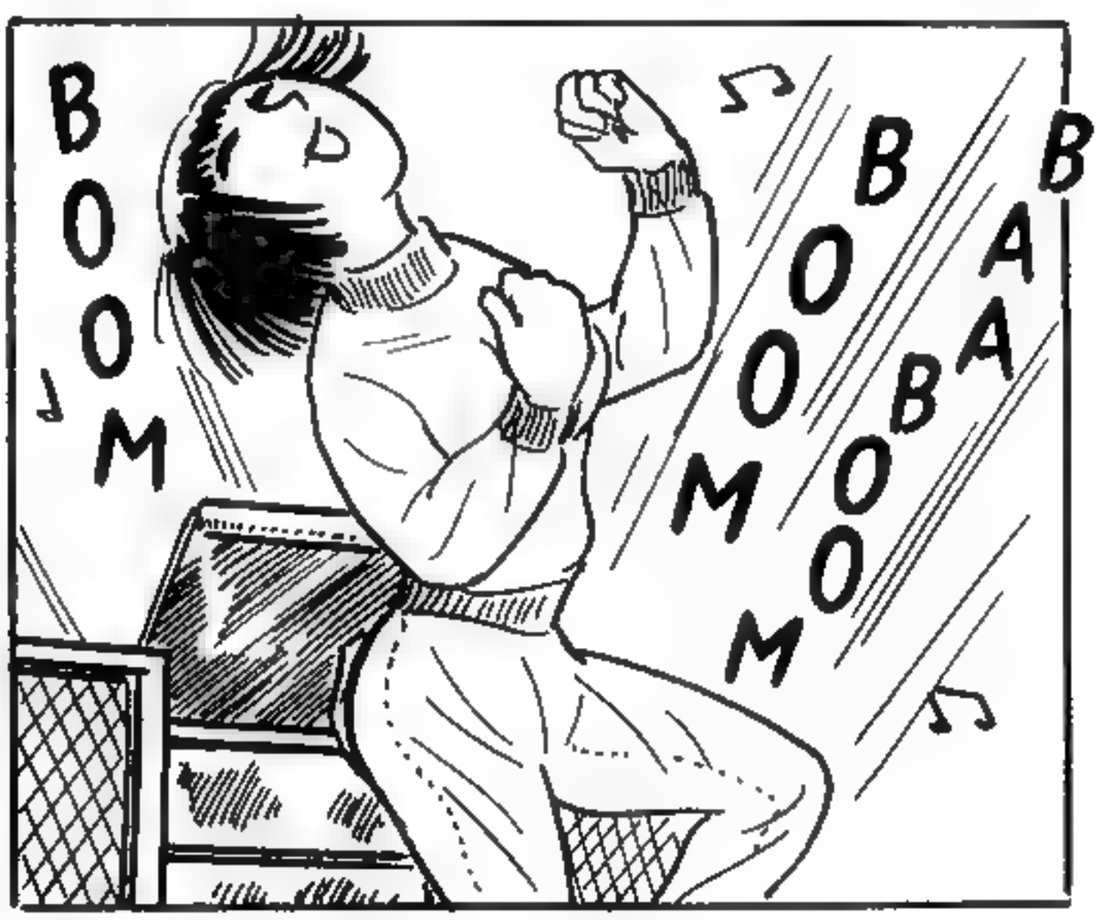
RRRR
KLAKK
HI DAD.
I WANTED TO BORROW SOME SOY SAUCE.
R-RURIKO...
YES?
WHAT IS IT?
...
YOU'RE BEING STRANGE.
LA LA LA
CHAK

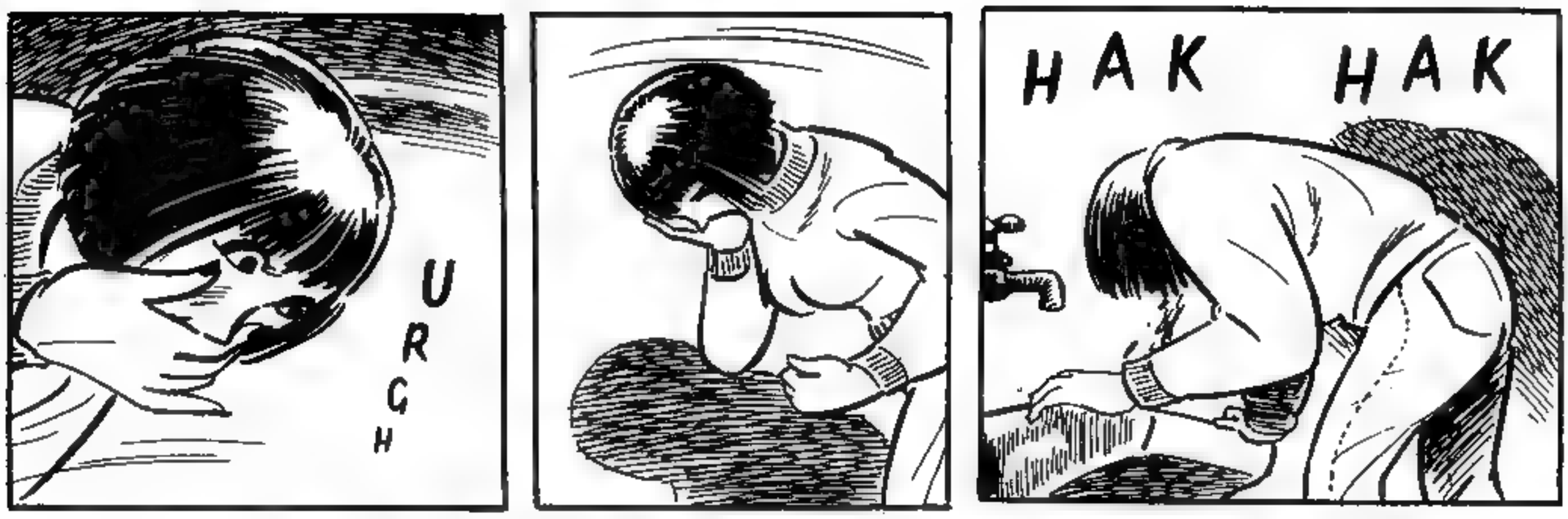


CHOP
CHOP



BOOM
BOOM
BABOOM


BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
BABOOM


URGH
HAK HAK

KALK
...

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?
YOU PERVERT!

ZHOOP
FWIP

FSSSSH

SCRUB
SCRUB

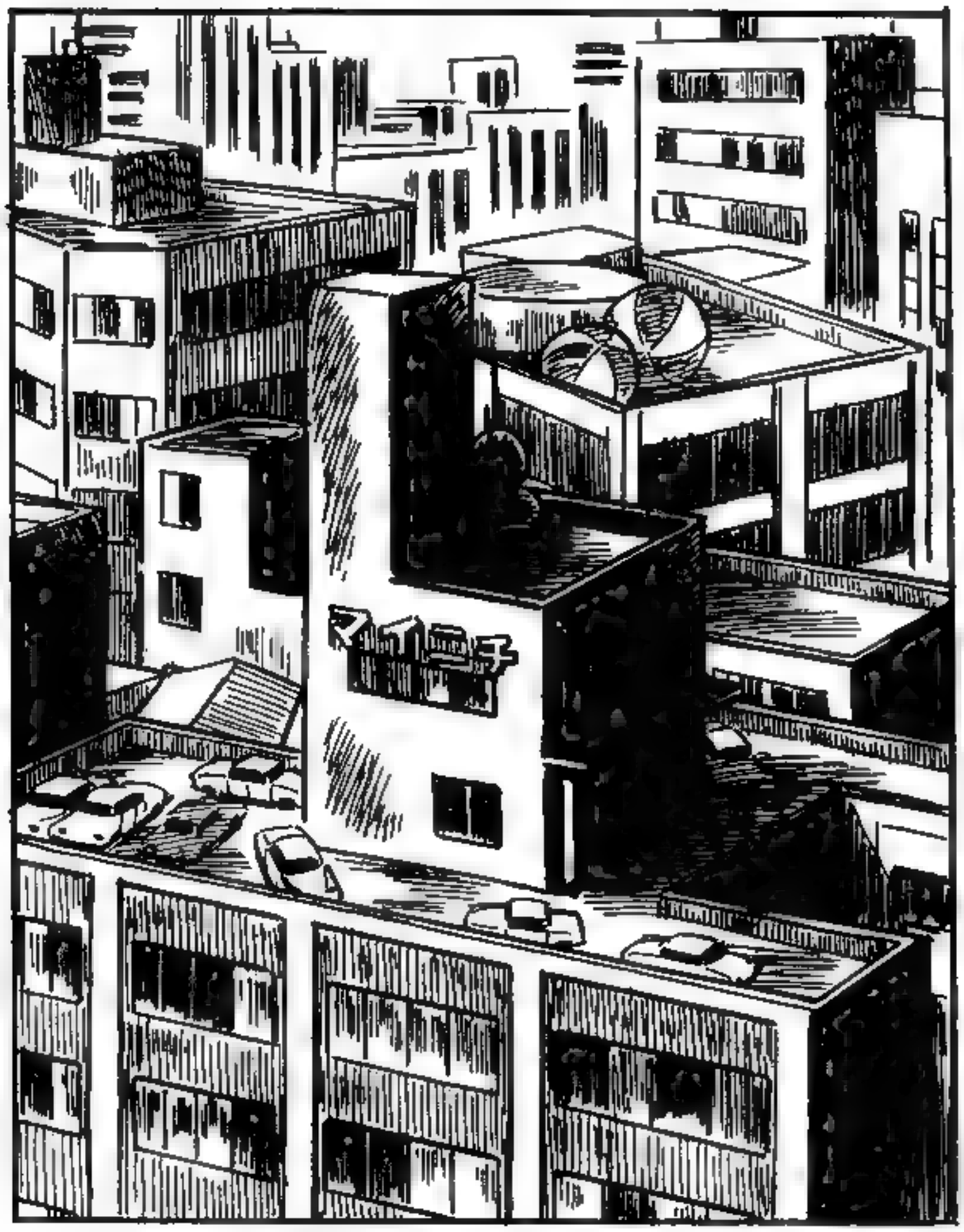
SCRUB
SCRUB SCRUB

SCRUB SCRUB

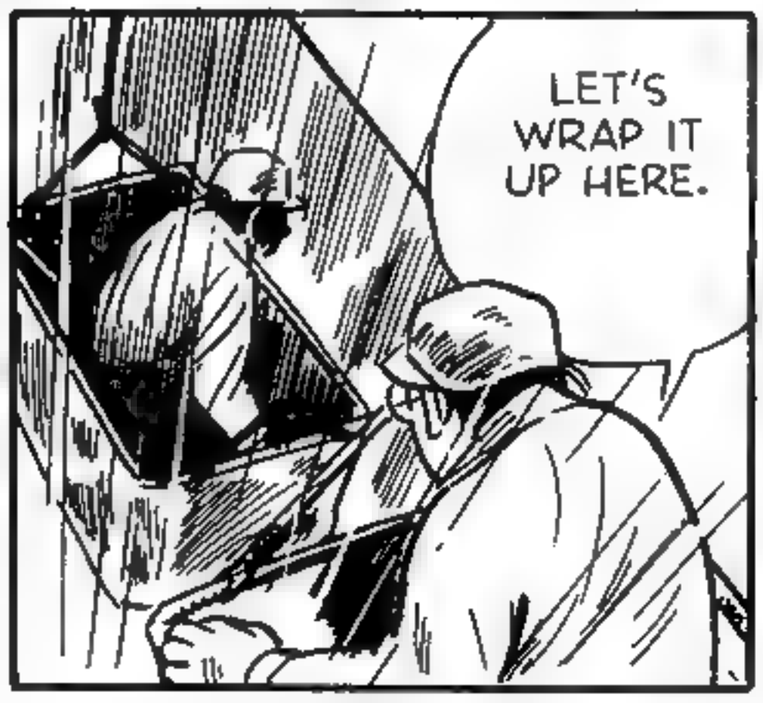
I'M NOT SOME SHEET OF GLASS!
LEAVE ME ALONE.

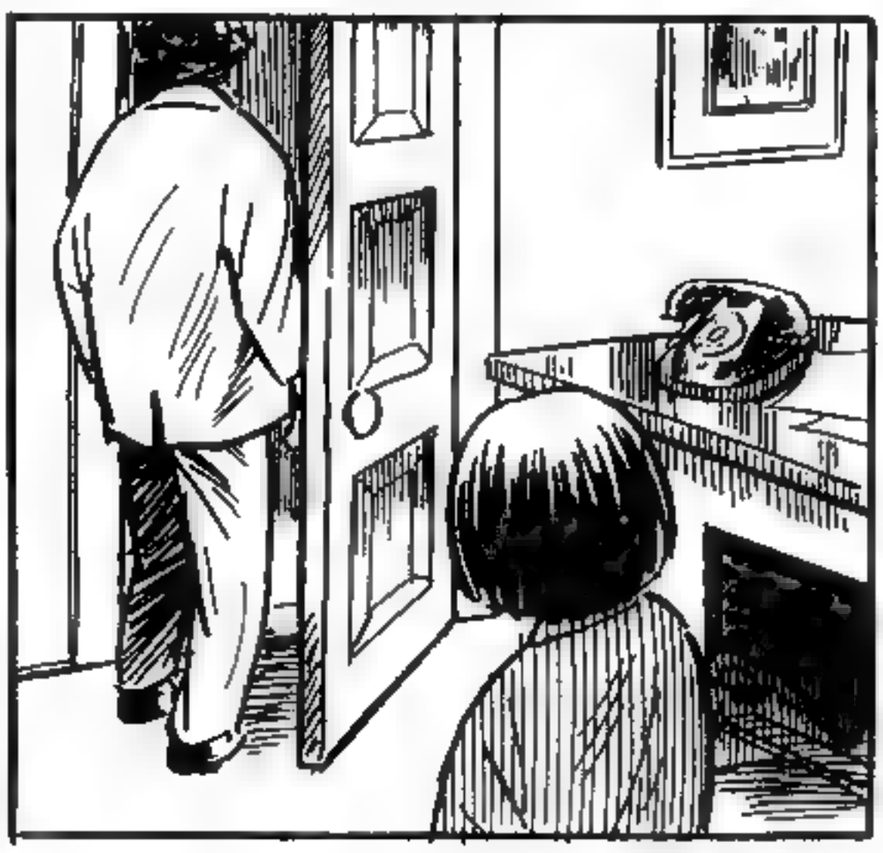
THIS IS TOO MUCH.
I'M LEAVING.

FWAK
K



OH MAN...IT'S RAINING.

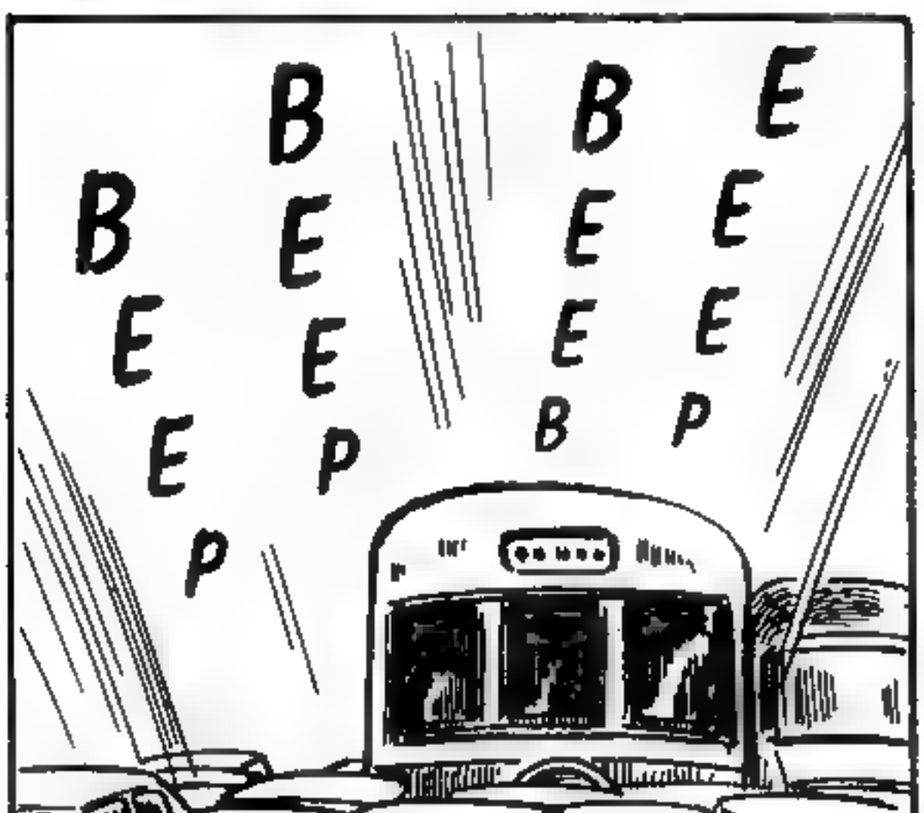

LET'S WRAP IT UP HERE.



UNGH
ARRGH
MY STOMACH...
I'M NOT FEELING WELL. PLEASE CALL AN AMBU-LANCE.
AHHH
AHHH
AAAHHH

WAH
WAH

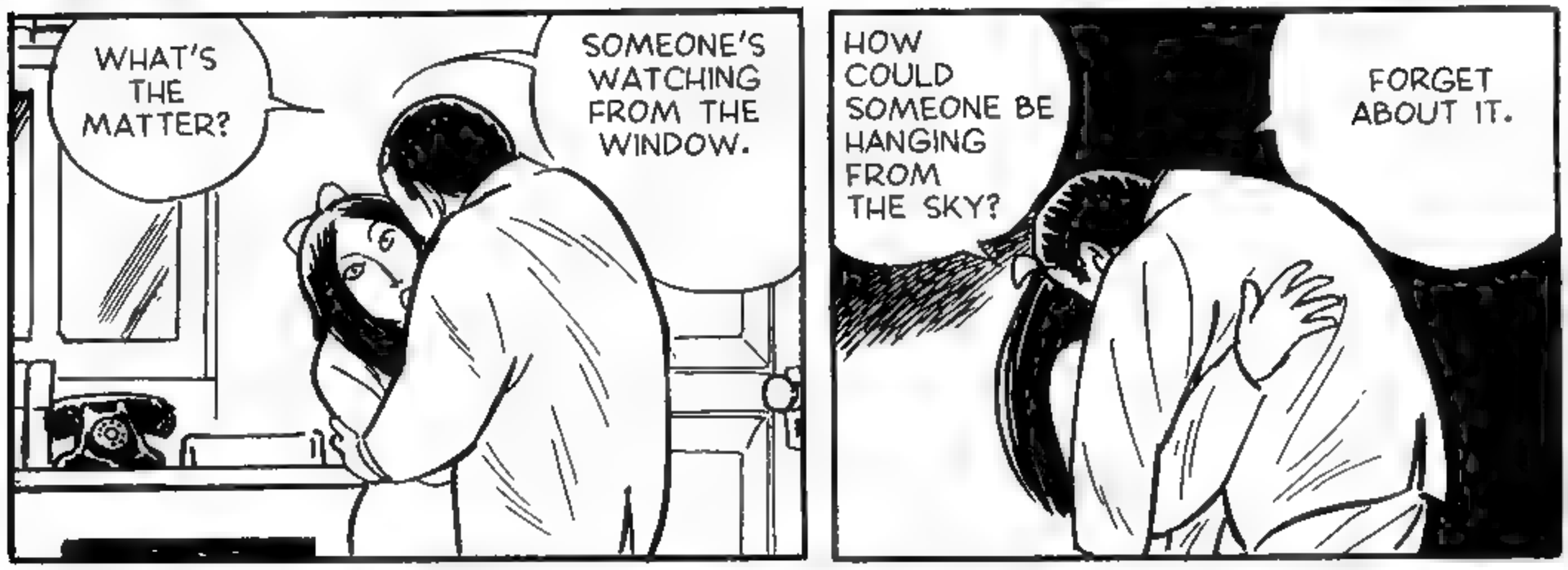
FSSH FSSH

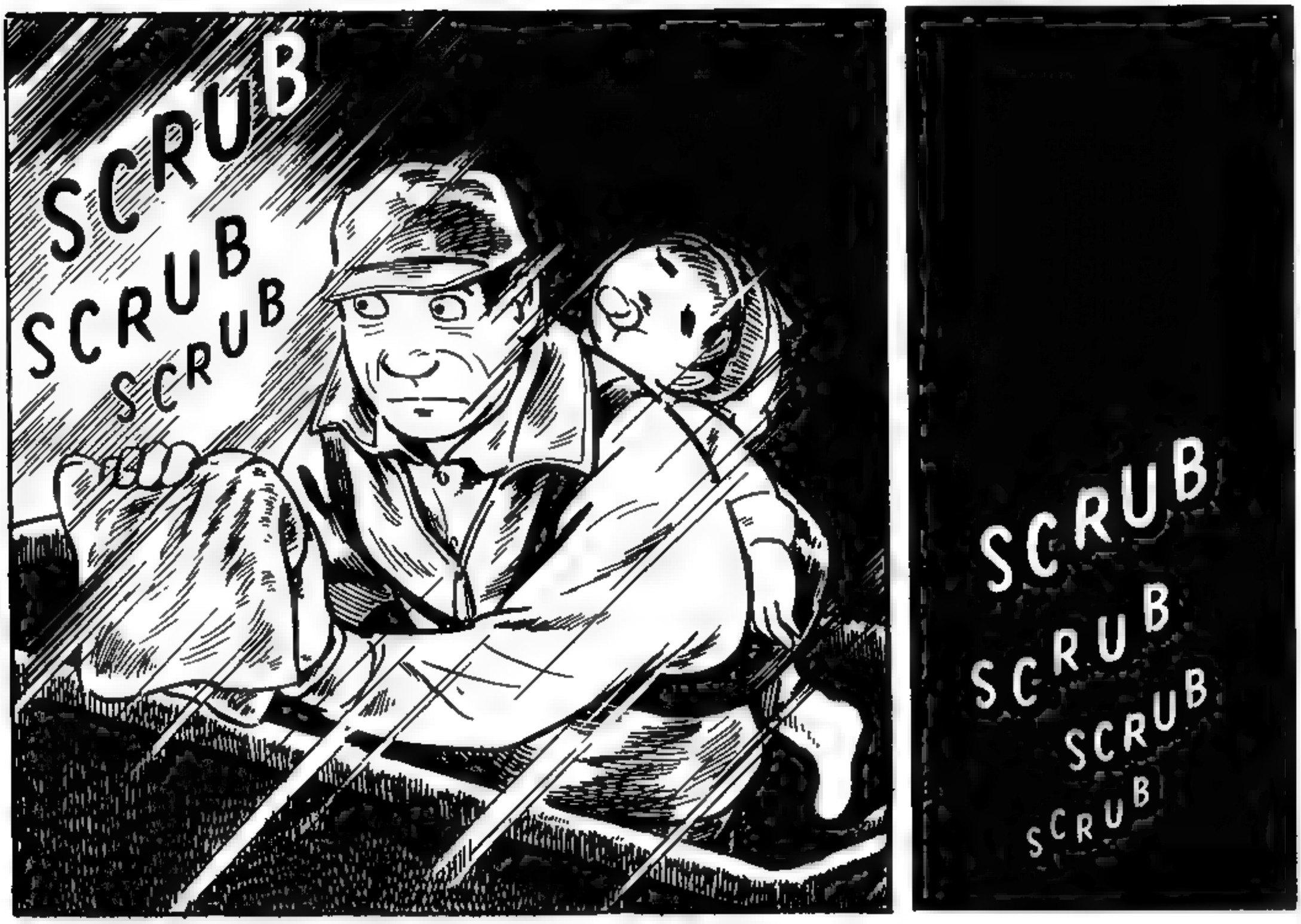

BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

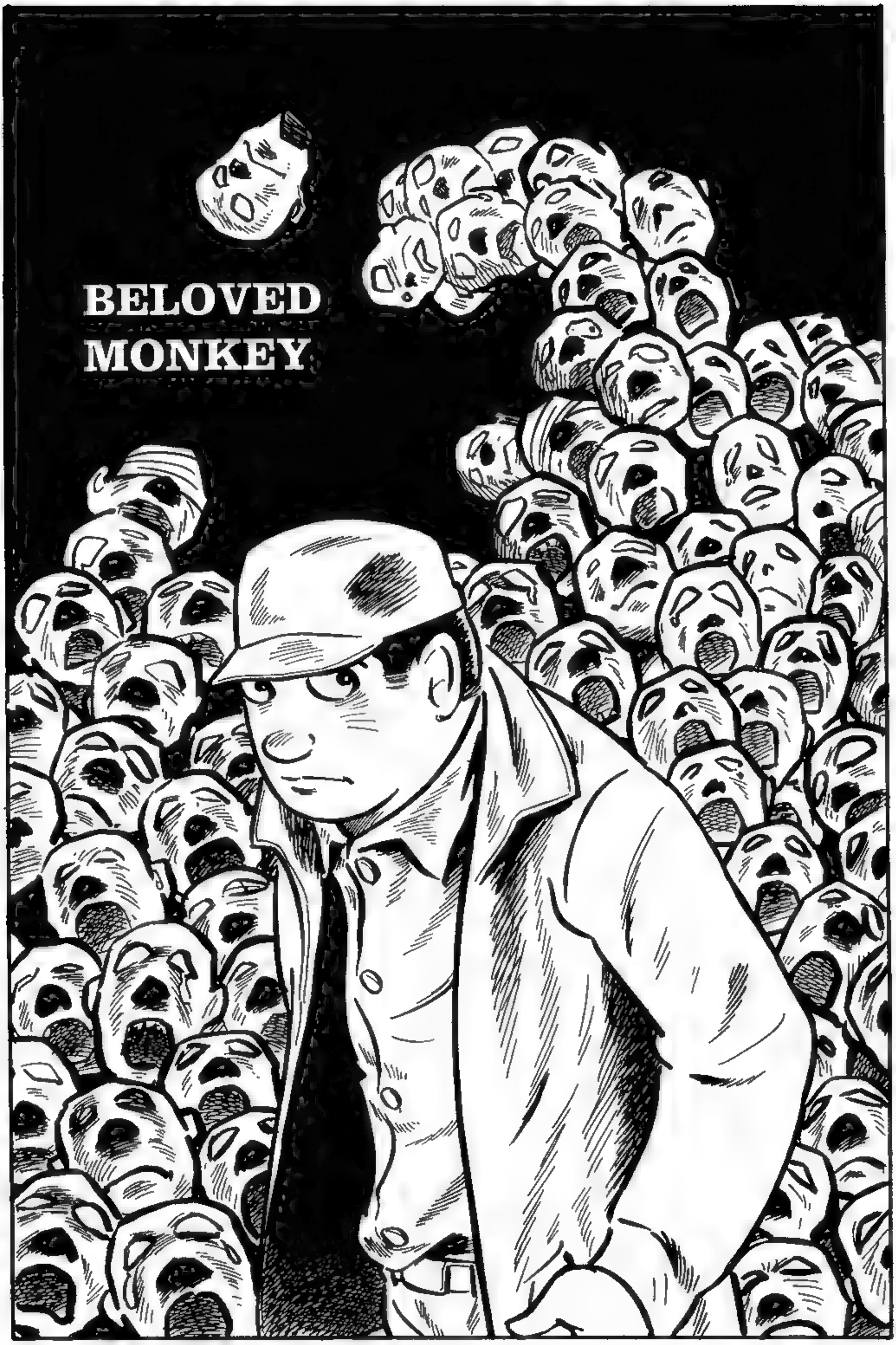
HONK
HONK

KEEP IT
DOWN, MAN!

GASP!


WHAT'S THE MATTER?
SOMEONE'S WATCHING FROM THE WINDOW.
HOW COULD SOMEONE BE HANGING FROM THE SKY?
FORGET ABOUT IT.


SCRUB
SCRUB
SCRUB
SCRUB
SCRUB
SCRUB
SCRUB


BELOVED
MONKEY

RRRR
KTUNK
KTUNK
KTUNK
KTUNK

KLAK
KLAK
RRRR
KLAK
KLAK

HABIT CAN BE A SCARY THING. WHEN YOU'RE SURROUNDED ALL DAY BY NOISE AT WORK, SILENCE ALMOST SEEMS CREEPY.

KTUNNK
KTUNNK
KTUNNK
KTUNNK

KTUNK KTUNK KTUNK KTUNK KTUNK KLANG KLANG KLANG KTUNK KTUNK

IT'S TOO LOUD TO TALK, SO THERE'S NO NEED FOR CONVERSATION...

THE NOISE OF MACHINES OVER-TAKES THE WORLD AS EVERYONE BE-COMES ISOLATED.

THE MORE PEOPLE FLOCK TOGETHER, THE MORE ALIENATED THEY BECOME.

KLAK
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK
KLAK
HUF
HUF
TAX
TOK
TOK
TOK
TOK
HUF
HUF

空室あり

泉荘

SIGN: ROOMS AVAILABLE

MY SINGLE-ROOM CASTLE...

I DON'T FEEL ALONE ONCE I'M HERE.

MY PET MONKEY.

FOR SOME REASON, HE ALWAYS HAS HIS BACK TO ME.

SANKO TV 17

I'VE GOT MY GIRL BY MY UNMADE BED.

ROARING FROM BEHIND

THE MUSIC MAKES ME FEEL LIKE A MAN...

CHINESE LION BOOM

CHINESE LION BOOM

CHINESE LION BOOM

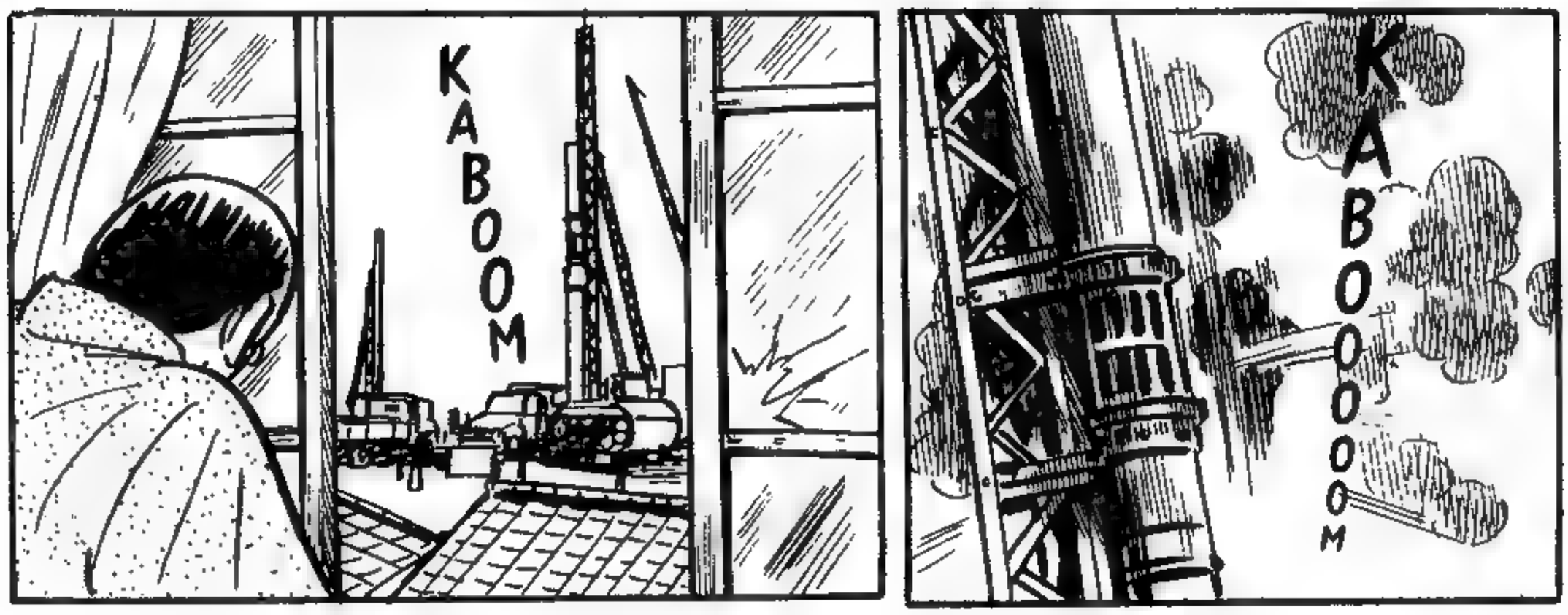
FROM MY ROOM, THE VIETNAM WAR, THE TROUBLES IN OKINAWA...

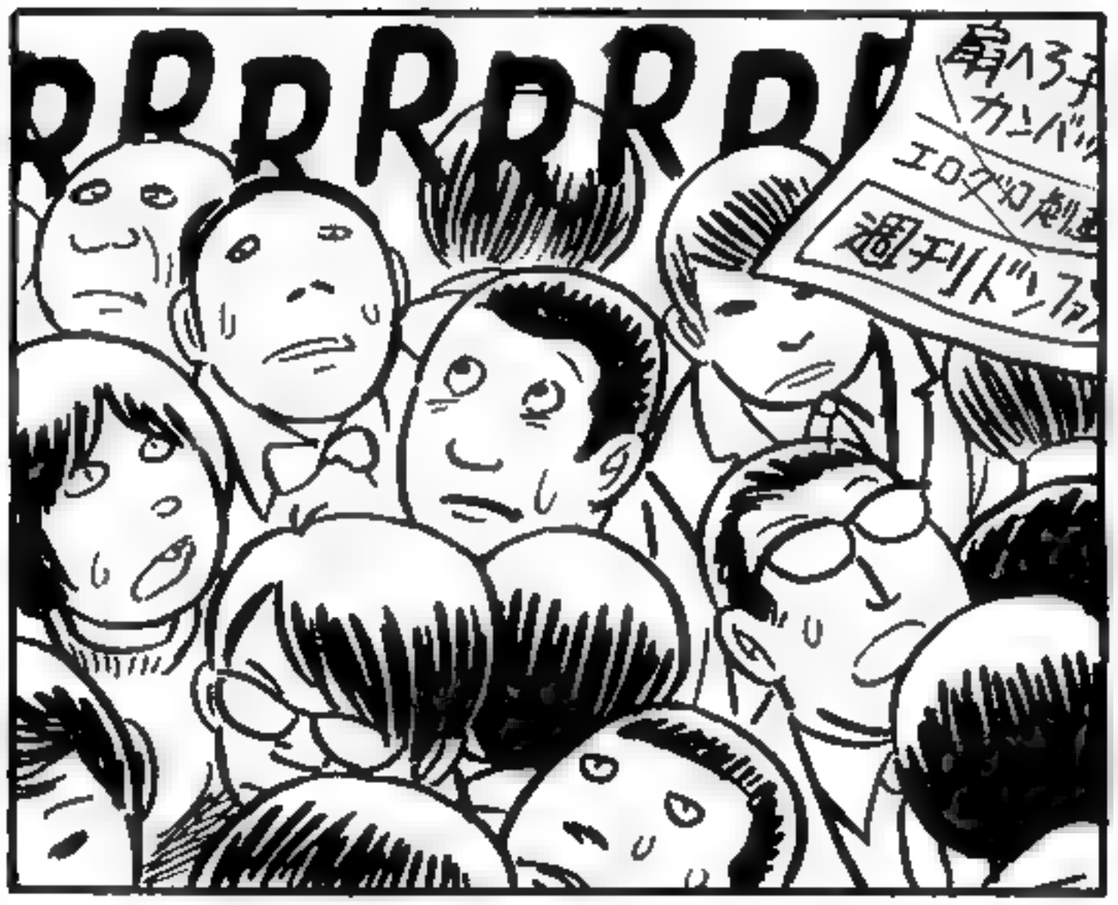
...THE MINIMATA MERCURY POISONING, CROSSING THE PACIFIC IN A YACHT...

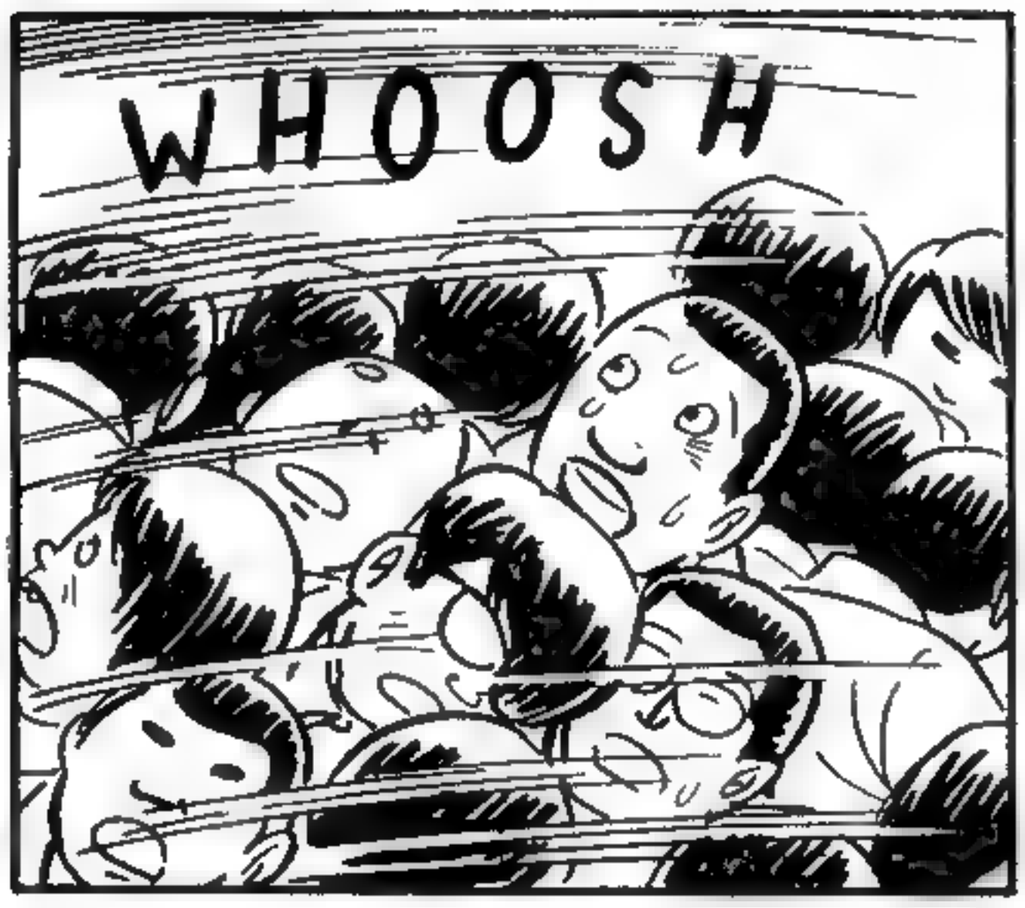
...ALL THOSE THINGS SEEM UNREAL.

THE ONLY TIME I FEEL HUMAN IS WHEN I'M WITH MY MONKEY.

KABOOM




RRRRRRR
週刊ドッファ


WHOOSH

SCREEECH
常磐・東北方面
高崎・上越・信越線
FOR TOHOKU JOBAN・
TAKASAKI ETSUETSU SHIN
C56
磯子
お宿都
京浜
(蒲田・横
3番
3

WHUMP WHUMP WHUMP
WHUMP WHUMP

SQUISH
SQUISH

SQUISH

SQUISH

DON'T PUSH !

YOU'LL SMASH THE DOOR OPEN!

KLAKETTA

KLAKETTA

KLAKETTA

KLAKETTA

KLAKETTA

KLAKETTA

KLAKETTA

...

DAMN !

WE'RE PACKED IN HERE LIKE SARDINES WHILE THE COWS ARE TRAVELING LIKE KINGS.

RRRRRRRRRRRR

WHUMP

WHUMP

WHUMP

SIGN: (MAIN) UENO OKACHIMACHI UGUISUDANI

I LEFT MY HOME IN THE COUNTRY FIVE YEARS AGO AND CAME TO UENO.
BEING THERE AGAIN BROUGHT BACK MEMORIES.
I DECIDED TO WANDER AROUND.

FIVE YEARS AGO, WHEN I ARRIVED IN UENO, I WAS FILLED WITH SUCH HIGH HOPES.

I WASN'T IN THE MOOD TO GO TO WORK AT ALL.

上野動物園

UENO ZOO

THE ZOO WAS PRETTY EMPTY IN THE MORNING.

IT ALMOST FELT LIKE THE ANIMALS WERE HERE TO WATCH HUMANS.

YEE
YEE

YEE

YEE

YEE
YEE

YAHH

YEE

YEE

YAH
YAH
YEE
YEE

YEE YEE YEE

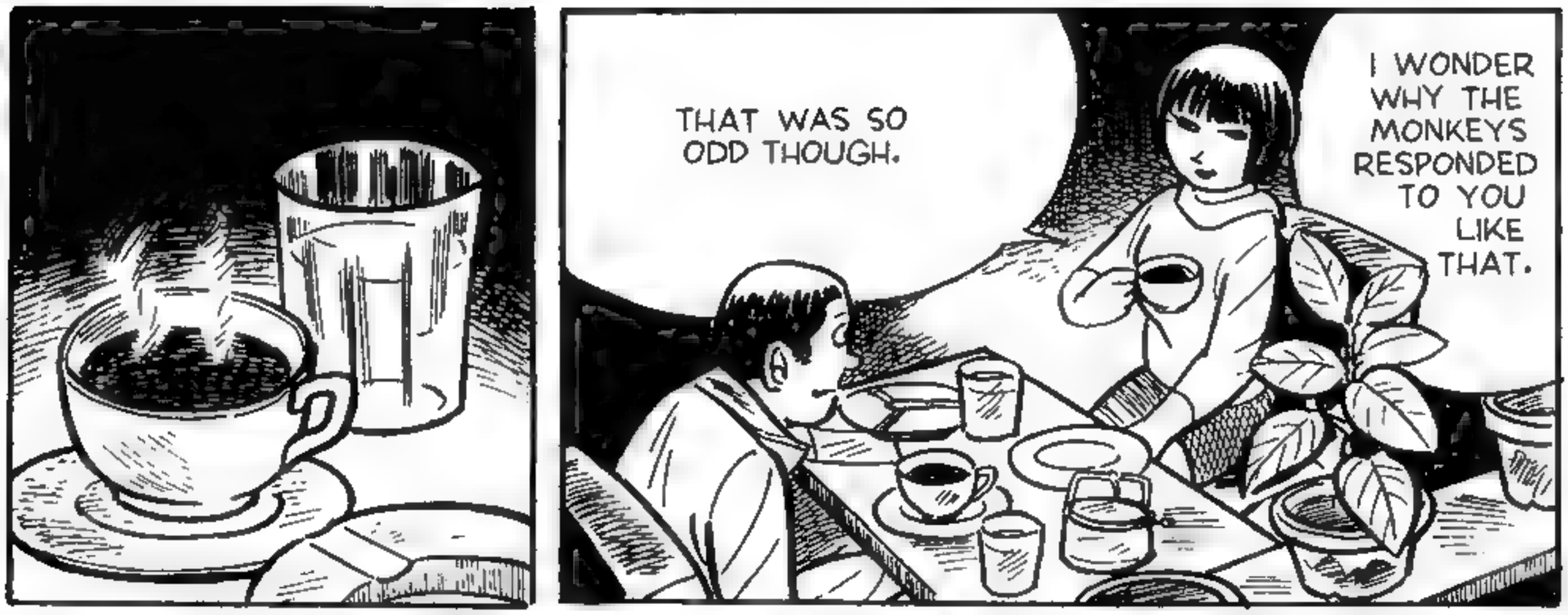
HAHAHAHA

I WONDER WHAT'S GOING ON.

THEY SEEM KIND OF WORKED UP OVER YOU.

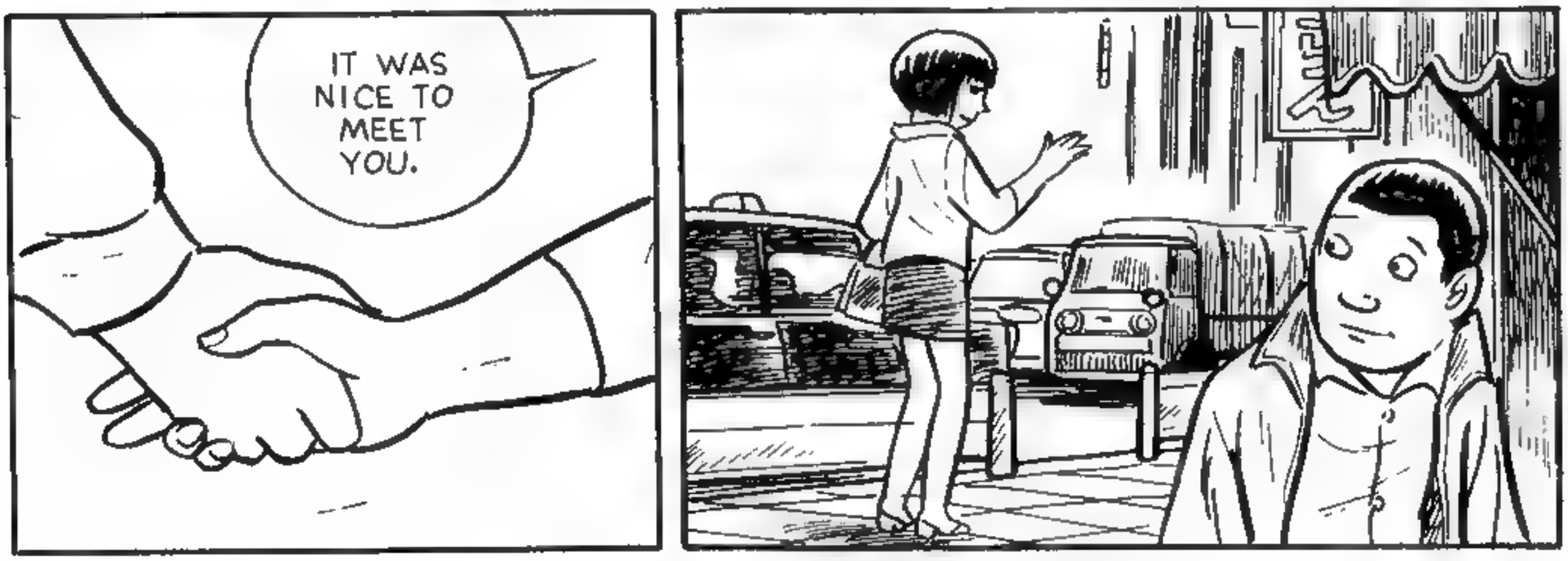
YAH YAH YEE YEE YEE YEE YEE

HA HA HA HA HA


THAT WAS SO ODD THOUGH.
I WONDER WHY THE MONKEYS RESPONDED TO YOU LIKE THAT.

I GUESS THAT'S WHY I WAS DRAWN TO YOU.
HAHA
CAN WE MEET AGAIN?
B-BUT I'M ONLY A FACTORY WORKER.

I DON'T CARE.
PLEASE.
MY NAME'S REIKO.
PLEASE CALL ME WHEN YOU CAN.


IT WAS NICE TO MEET YOU.

RRRRRRRRRR

YOU'VE BEEN SMILING ALL DAY. SOMETHING GOOD HAPPEN?

SO YOU GOT A GIRL.

YOU MIGHT NOT BELIEVE ME... BUT YOU BETTER WATCH OUT.

HEE HEE

...THE GODDESS I KNEW SINCE I WAS A CHILD...

...MY...

SANKO TV

CHINESE LI BOOM TION

CHINESE LION BOOM BOOM ♫

CHINESE LION BOOM BOOM ♫

CHINESE LION BOOM BOOM ♫

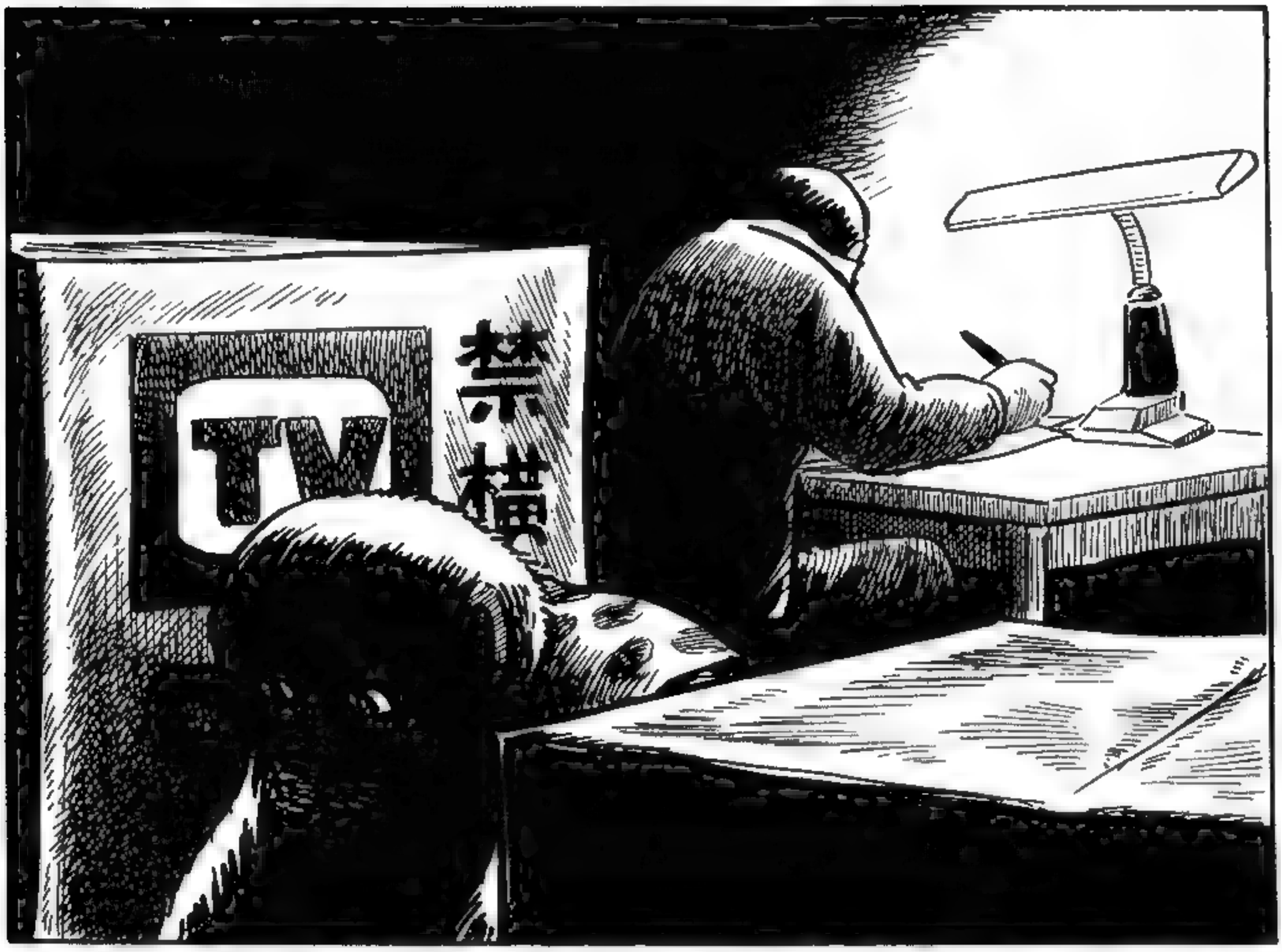
CHINESE LION BOOM BOOM ♫

KRAK

RRRIP

YEE

SANK TV


禁煙
TV

退職届
私こと、この度
一身上の都合に
LETTER: LETTER OF RESIGNATION. I AM WRITING HEREBY
...
TO ANNOUNCE MY RESIGNATION.

KTUNK KTUNK KTUNK KTUNK

RRRR

KTUNK TUNK

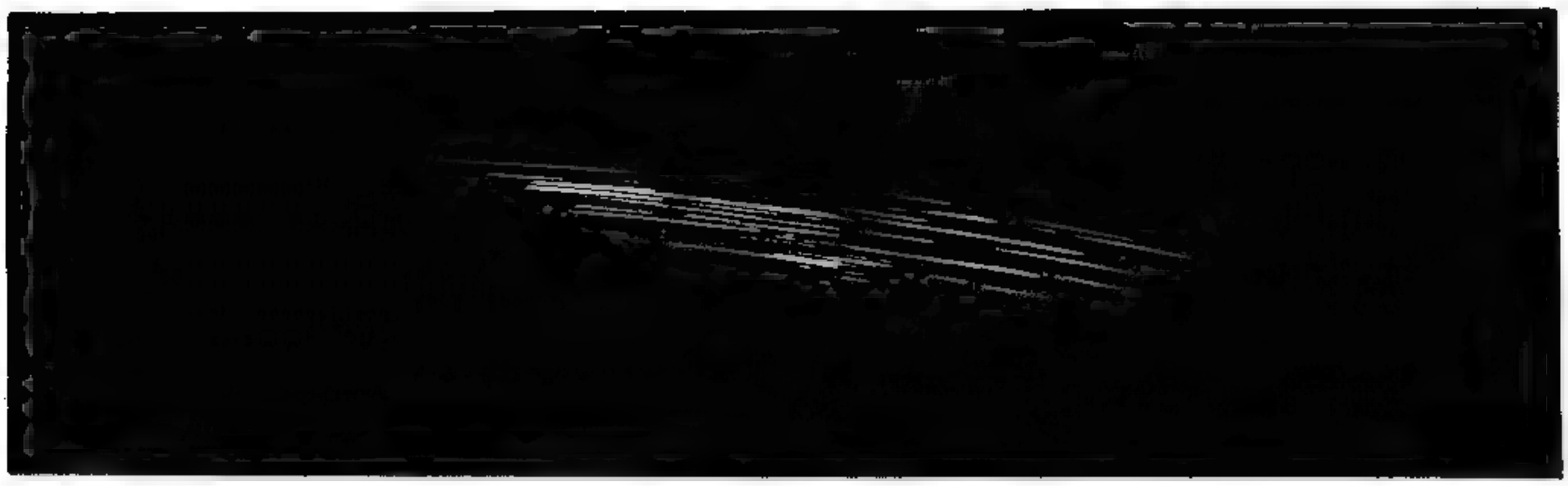
辞職届

LETTER OF RESIGNATION

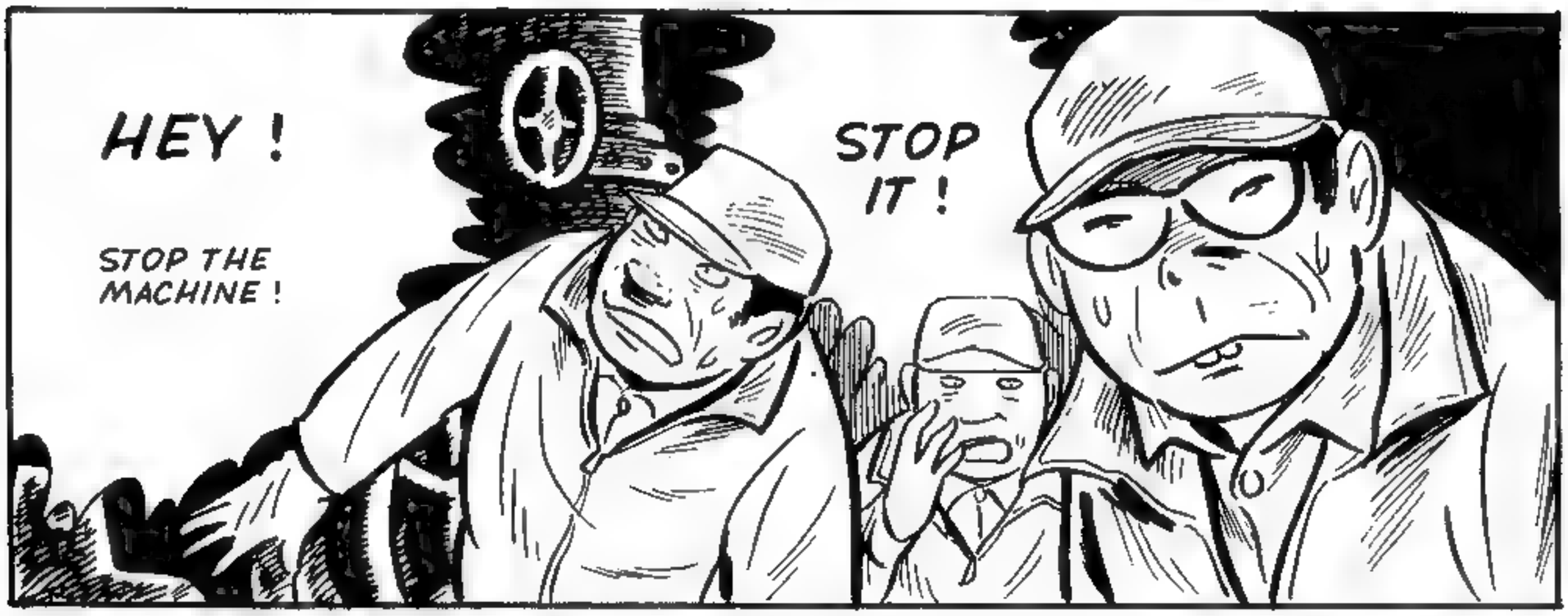
ARRRGH!

RRRRRRR

AAAAAH!

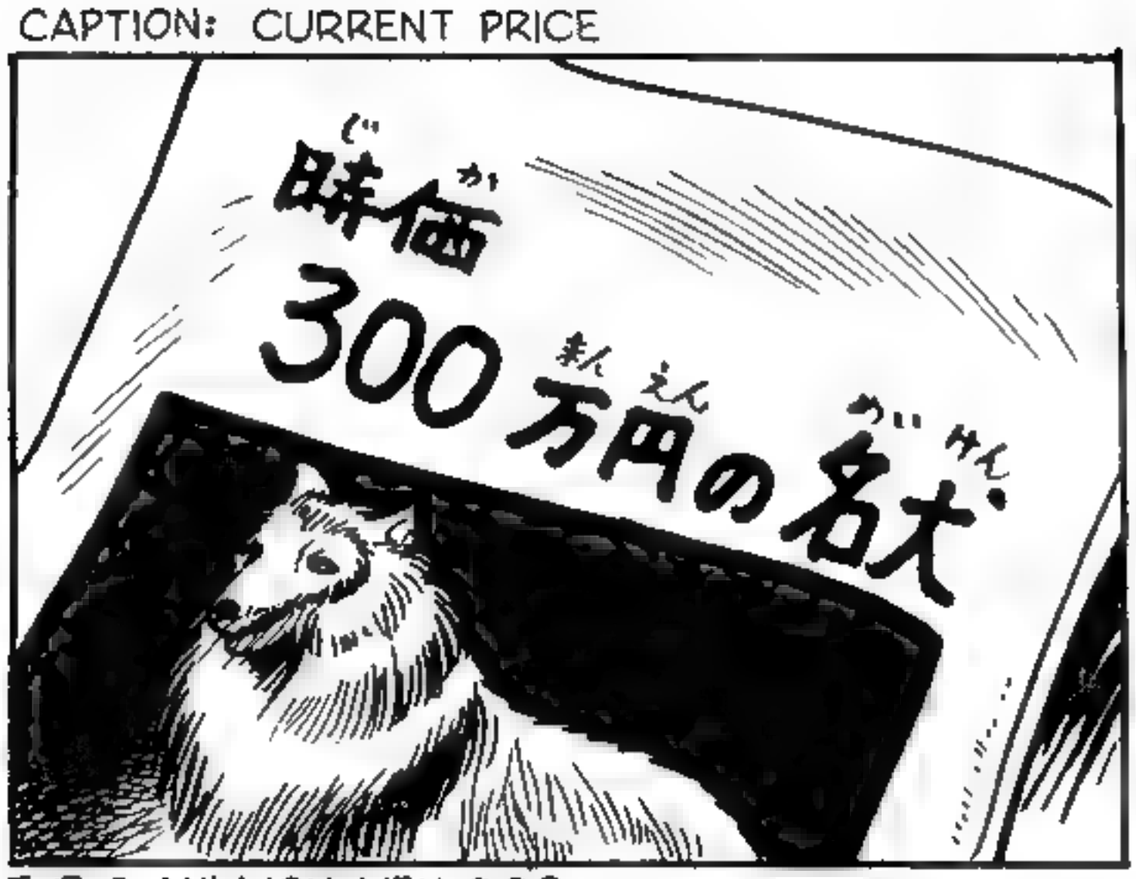


THUNK

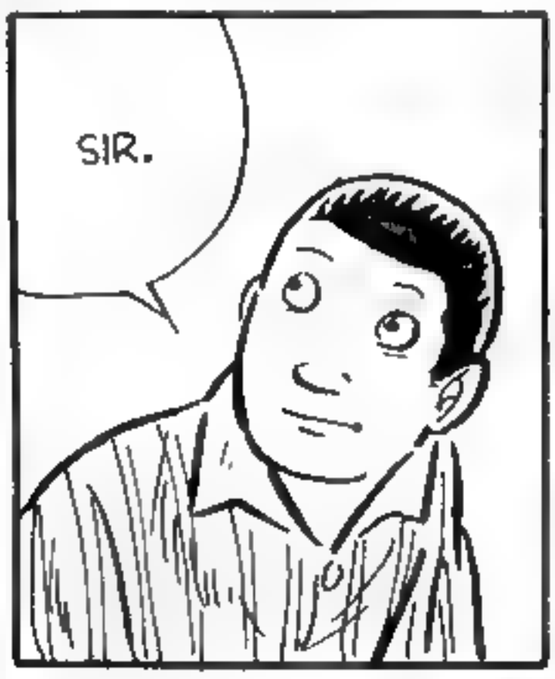

HEY !
STOP THE MACHINE !
STOP IT !

RRR
RRRRRR

CAPTION: CURRENT PRICE



THE 3 MILLION YEN DOG.



OH, THAT'S RIGHT.

WE'VE ACCEPTED YOUR LETTER OF RESIGNATION.

CHAK

寿々川

たばこ

SIGN: SUZUKAWA

すず

SIGN: BAR SUZU

THANKS FOR CALLING.

I'M SO GLAD YOU CAME.

HM.

I'M A HOSTESS HERE.

I'LL SHOW YOU A REAL GOOD TIME.

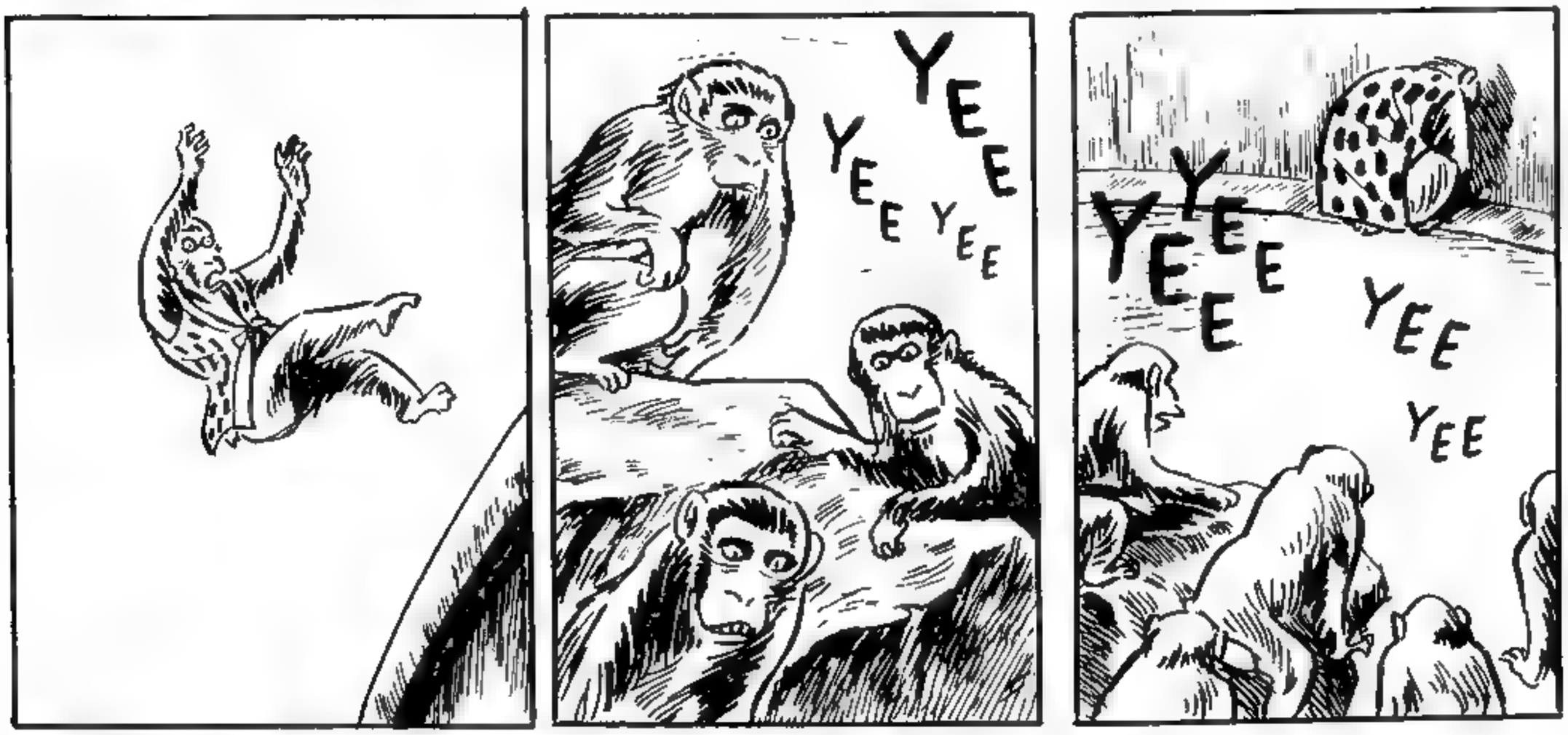
YOU MUST BE LOADED. I HEAR FACTORY WORKERS MAKE TONS OF CASH.

H A K K K

YEE YEE YEE YEE

IT'S TIME TO SAY GOODBYE, MONKEY.

WHY ARE YOU SO SCARED?
YEE
THEY'RE YOUR FRIENDS.
YEE YEE
GO JOIN THEM.
YA
YEE


YEE
YEE YEE
YEE
YEE
YEE
YEE

YEE
YEE
YEE

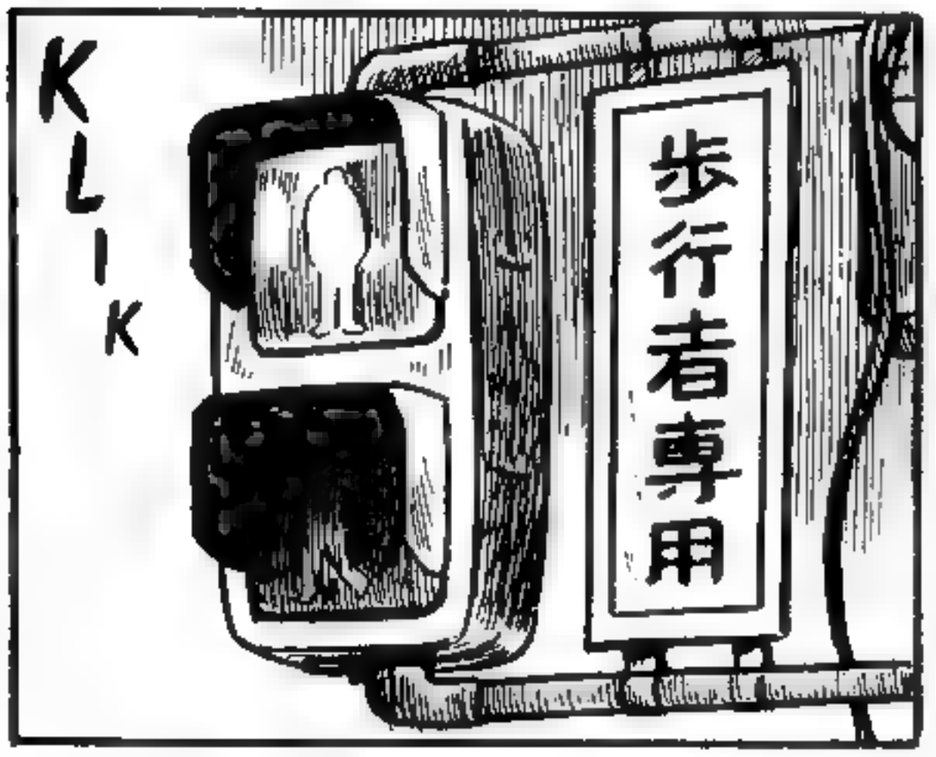
YEEE YEEE YEEE AIEE AIEE

MONKEY !

SIGN: JOB OPENINGS MEN: 10 EMPLOYEES WOMEN: 3 EMPLOYEES OTOWA FACTORY

SIGN: WANTED! SIGNS: WANTED ...

... COLLEGE GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL WANTED WE HIRE ON THE SPOT



SIGN: PEDESTRIAN SIGNAL

歩行者専用
ここから先
地下
映中

歩行者専用

KLIK

AAAAGGH!

UNPAID
SUBWAY
地下鉄

南ビル

KREEK

SIGN: SOUTH BUILDING

SIGN: YAMANUKI INC.

社長

HUF
HUF

SIGN: PRESIDENT

WHOOSH

BRRR

IT'S FREEZING.

KLIK

KLAK KLAK

I KNEW YOU'D BE BACK FOR THE COMPANY.

AIEE!

YOU SCARED ME.

WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE, OLD-TIMER?

"OLD-TIMER"?

YOUR COMPANY WENT UNDER. YOU'RE NO PRESIDENT ANY-MORE.

YOU'RE JUST AN OLD-TIMER.

IF YOU WANNA BOSS ME AROUND, I SUGGEST YOU PAY THE REST OF MY MONTH'S PAY. C'MON?

FSH FSH

HERE IT IS!

I FOUND IT.

WELL, I'M OUTTA HERE.

YOU TAKE CARE.

HAH.

SLAM

TOK TOK

PAPER: COLLATERAL NOTE / YAMANUKI INC. / [STAMPED] UNPAID

THIS DISHONORED ¥7,000,000...

...THIS PIECE OF PAPER RUINED MY LIFE.

WHOOSH

SIGN: SPEND A NICE DAY WITH A CUTE DOG.
DOG APPRECIATION CLUB.

KLAK
KLAK

OH, YOU'RE HOME.

YOU'RE HOME LATE SO THERE'S NOTHING FOR YOU.

HERE'S YOUR TEA.

SLURP

SO, WILL YOU BE ABLE TO TURN THE COMPANY AROUND?

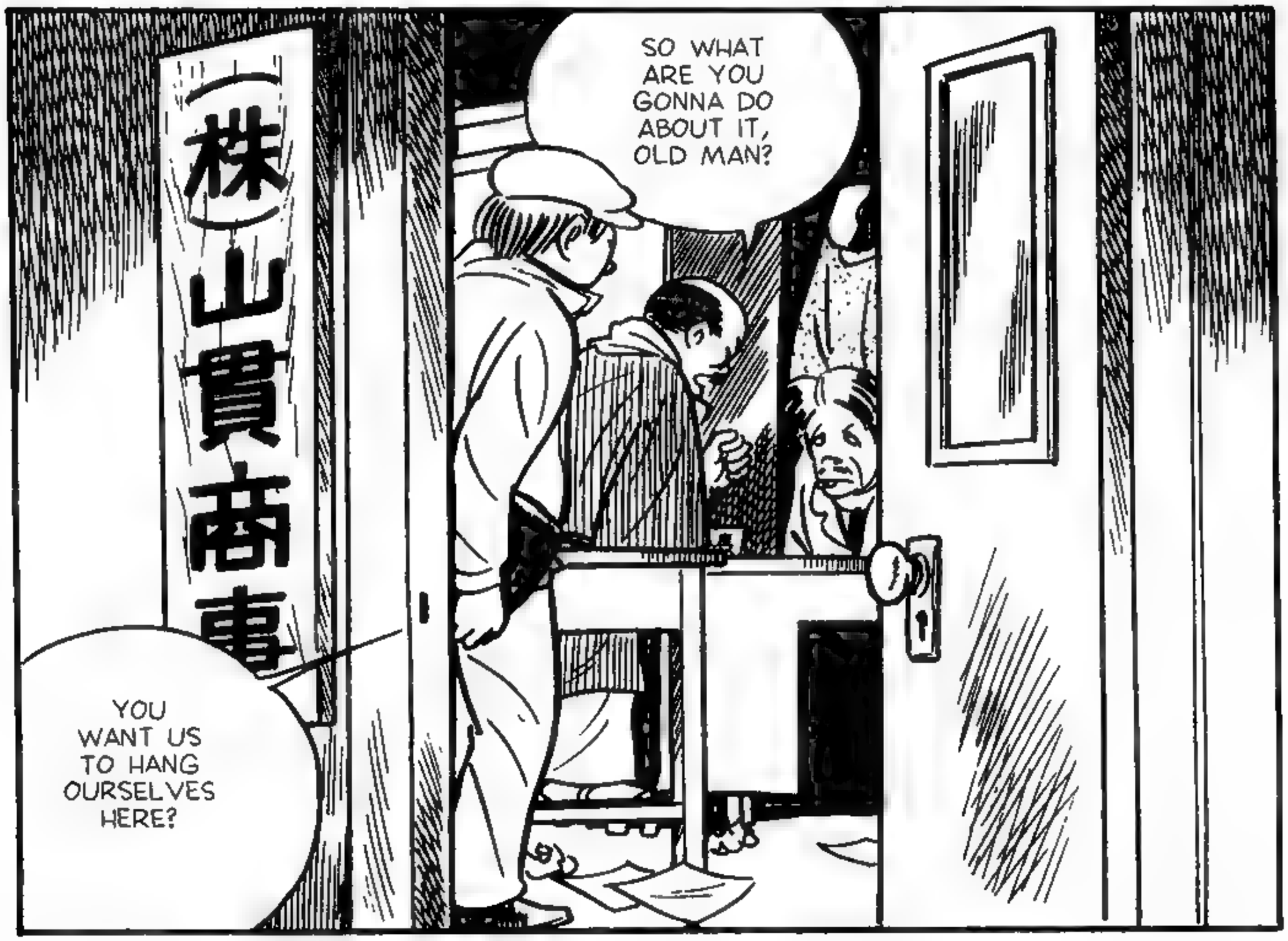
YOU HAVE TO STAY ON TOP OF THINGS.

OTHERWISE THEY'LL END UP TAKING THIS HOUSE TOO.

KLAK
KLAK

SLURP

I CAN'T STAND THIS.



SIGN: YAMANUKI INC.

I APOLOGIZE FOR ANY TROUBLE I'VE CAUSED.

BUT YOU GOTTA UNDER-STAND I'M A VICTIM HERE, TOO.

THIS IS MONEY YOU OWE.

YOUR DISHONORED NOTE'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH US.

YOU'RE NOT BEING VERY DILIGENT.

YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANY-THING ABOUT THE MONEY. MAYBE I SHOULD GO TO THE COPS.

I'LL DO ANY-THING.

PLEASE, I'M BEGGING ON MY KNEES.

HOLD ON.

I PROMISE I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS.

HAH.

I'M TIRED OF HEARING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER.

WHY DON'T YOU SPIN AROUND THREE TIMES AND BARK?

FWIP

SURE THING.

FUP FUP
...
...
RUFF

RUFF
RUFF
...

LET'S GO.
HAH... YOU'RE SUB-HUMAN.
...
KRRR
KLAKK
KLAKK
KLAKK
KLAKK

かわいい犬と
楽しい一日を
すごしませんか
愛犬クラブ

KLAKK KLAKK

RRRRRRRR

POSTER: SPEND A NICE DAY WITH A CUTE DOG. DOG APPRECIATION CLUB

愛犬クラブ

SIGN: PET APPRECIATION CLUB

WELCOME.

THIS WAY, PLEASE.

WHAT TYPE WOULD YOU LIKE...?

I - I DON'T CARE.

I'LL BE RIGHT OUT.

SHE'S VERY WELL-GROOMED.
YOU SHOULD FORGET EVERYTHING AND BECOME ONE WITH THE DOG.

TAKE YOUR TIME...

AWRRR
THEY TOOK OUT YOUR TEETH, HUH?
H-HEY... STOP IT.
AWRRR
...
WOAH... STOP THAT.
AWRRR
YOU'RE CRYING...
ALL RIGHT.

UHHH

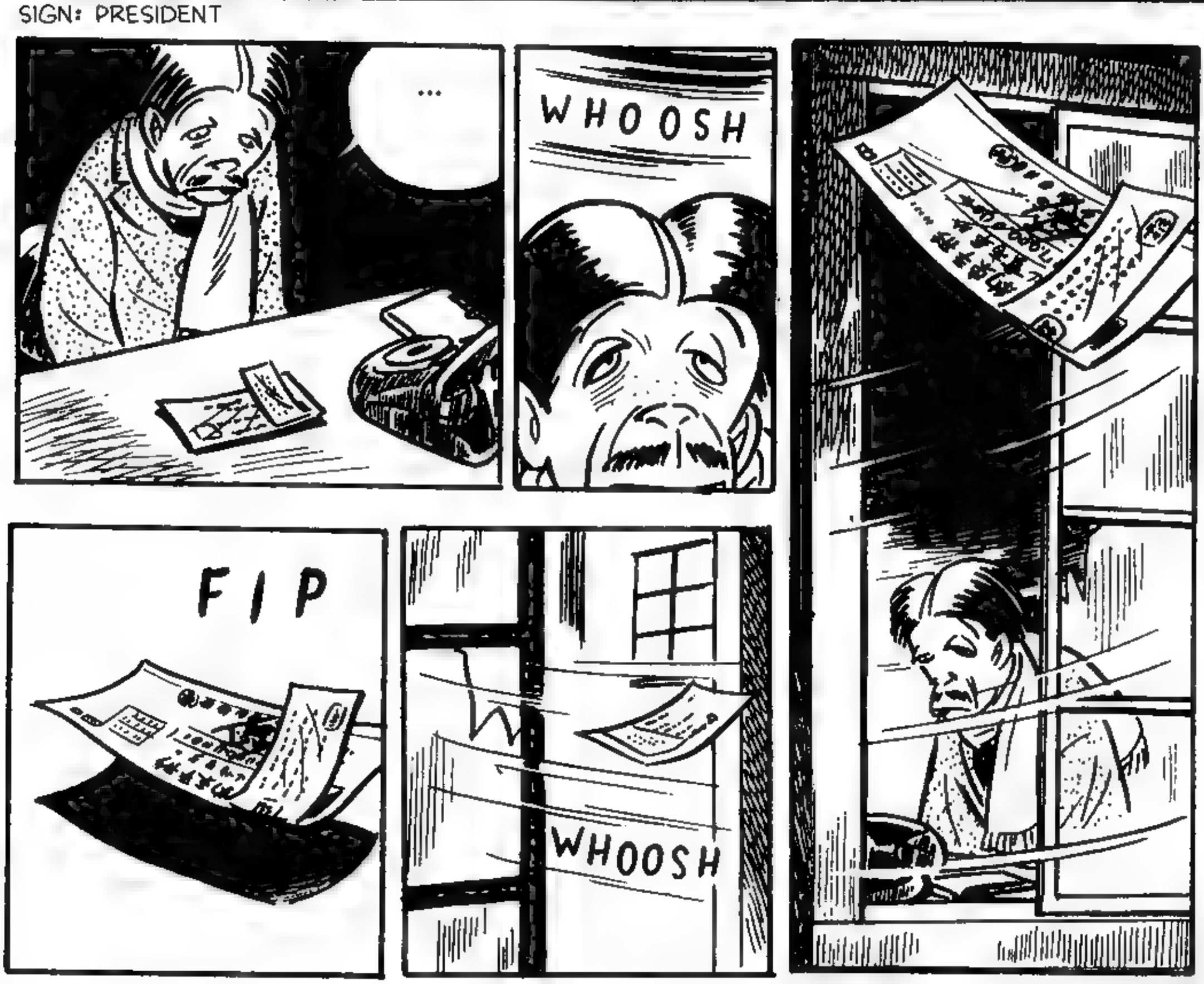
AHHH

UHHH
AWRRR

I STILL WANTED TO HOLD ONTO MY LAST OUNCE OF HUMAN DIGNITY...
YOU'RE PROBABLY CRYING FOR THE SAME REASON... I'M SURE.
AHHH

SIGN: YAMANUKI INC. NOTE: CREDITORS' MEETING

SIGN: PRESIDENT



PAPER: COLLATERAL NOTE / YAMANUKI INC. / [STAMPED] UNPAID

THE HOLE

TOK TOK

I SEEM TO HAVE LOST MY WAY.

EXCUSE ME.

TOK TOK

COULD YOU TELL ME HOW TO GET BACK TO SHIBUSAN VILLAGE?

...

THAT BACK TRAIL OVER THE MOUNTAIN WILL LEAD YOU DIRECTLY BACK TO SHIBUSAN VILLAGE.

TOK TOK

THANK YOU.

KRAK
KRAK

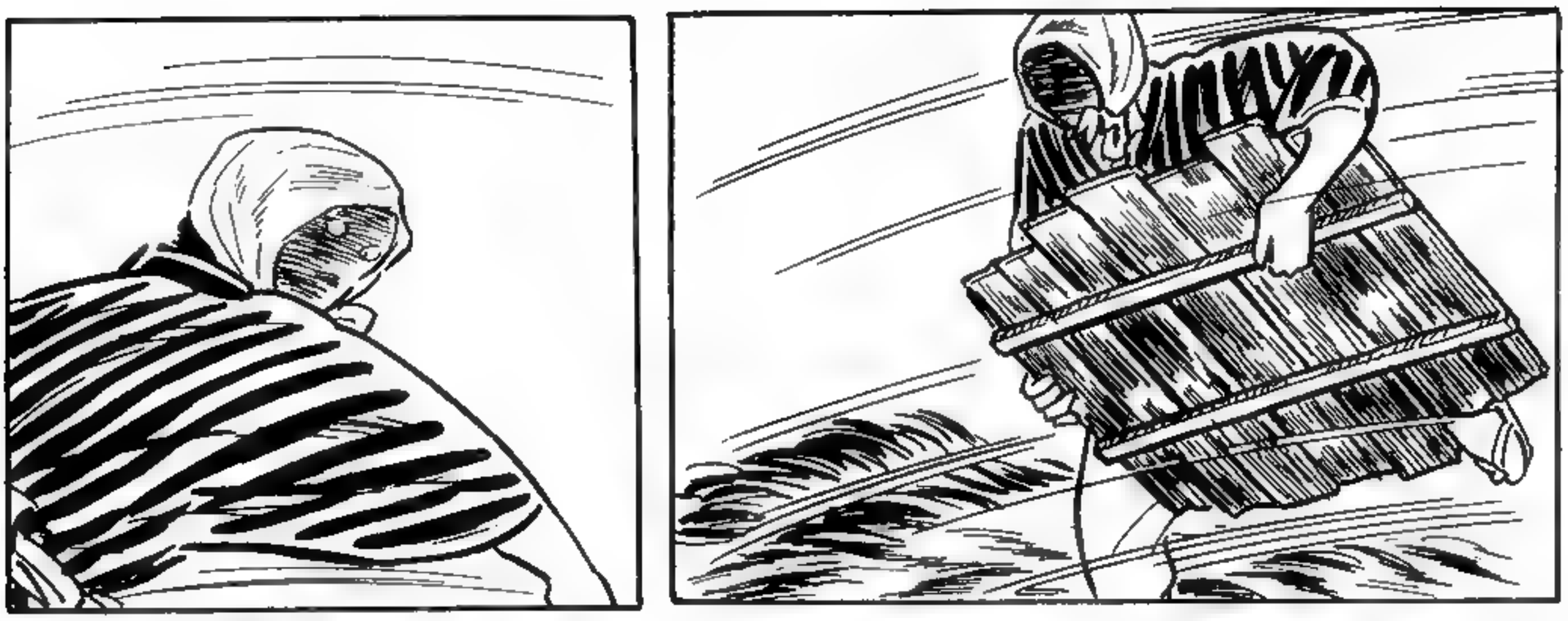
EEYAAH!

FWOOSH

ARRGH!

PLEASE HELP ME...
I FELL DOWN
THIS HOLE...
I CAN'T GET OUT...

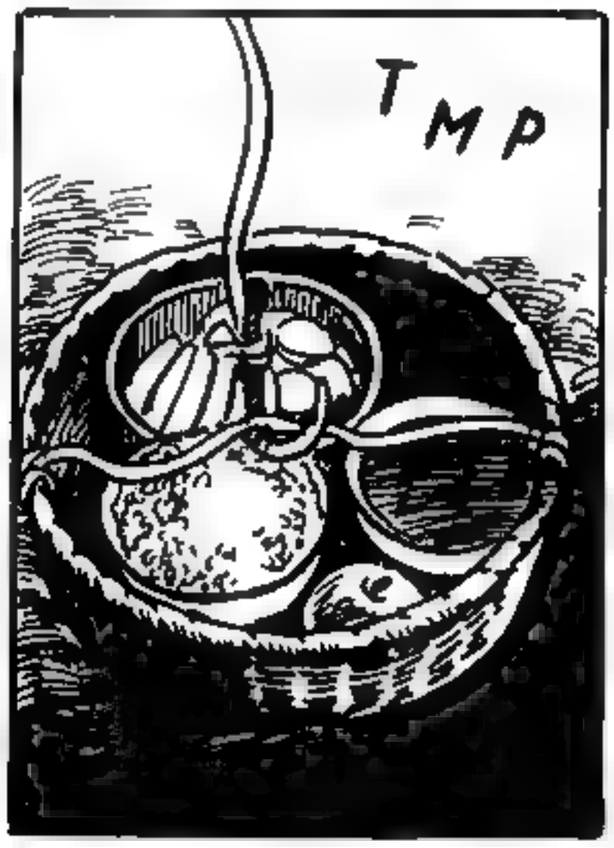
...

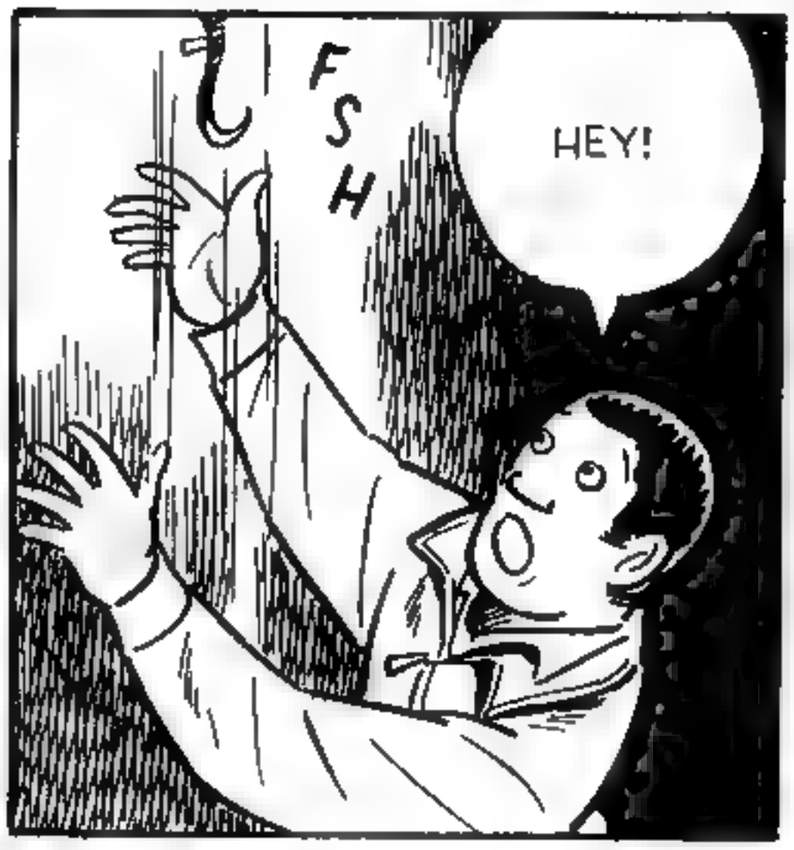


WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
PLEASE HELP ME!
THUMP

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
IS SHE OUT OF HER MIND?
HA HA HA ...

F S H
HERE'S YOUR FOOD...


T M P


F S H
HEY!

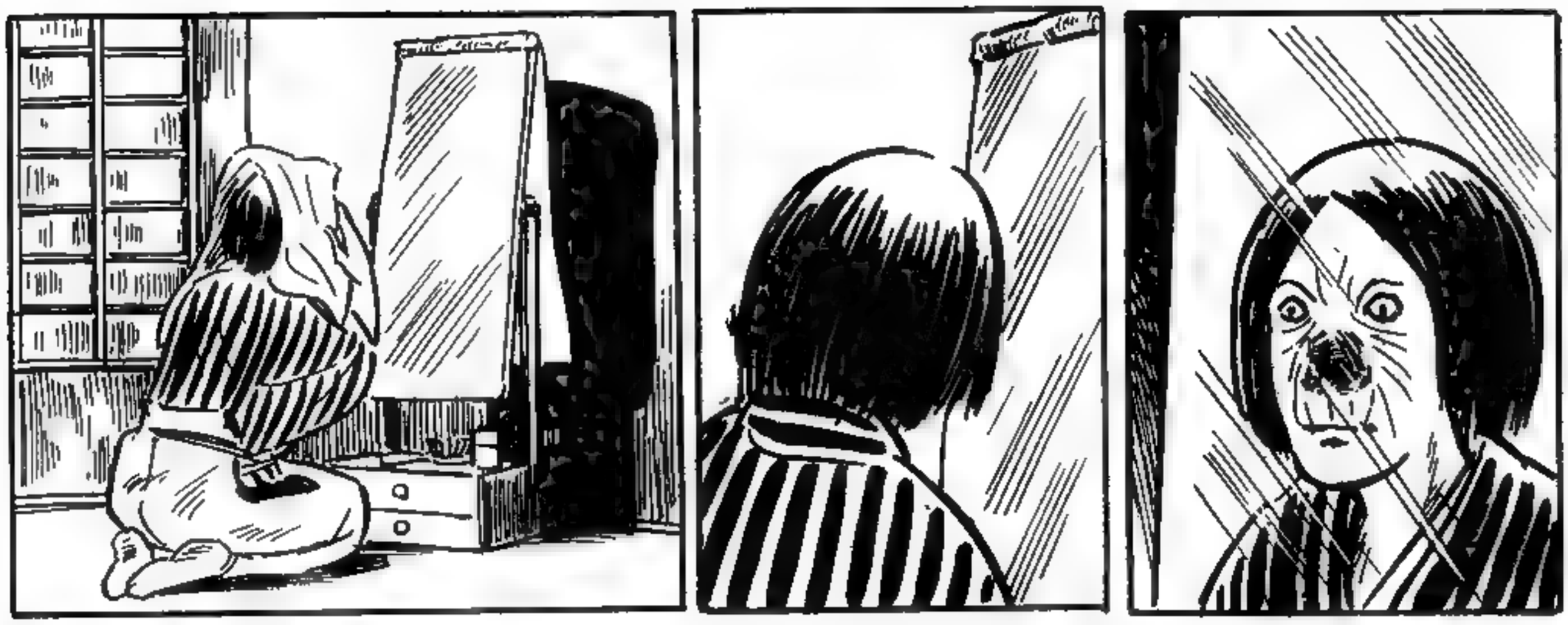
WHY DO YOU WANT TO TRAP ME HERE?
WHAT DID I EVER DO TO YOU? P-PLEASE... LET ME OUT.

THE ONLY WAY YOU'LL GET OUT OF THIS HOLE...
...IS TO KILL ME.
WH-WHAT!?
YOU'LL STARVE IF YOU DON'T EAT... SO I SUGGEST YOU EAT.

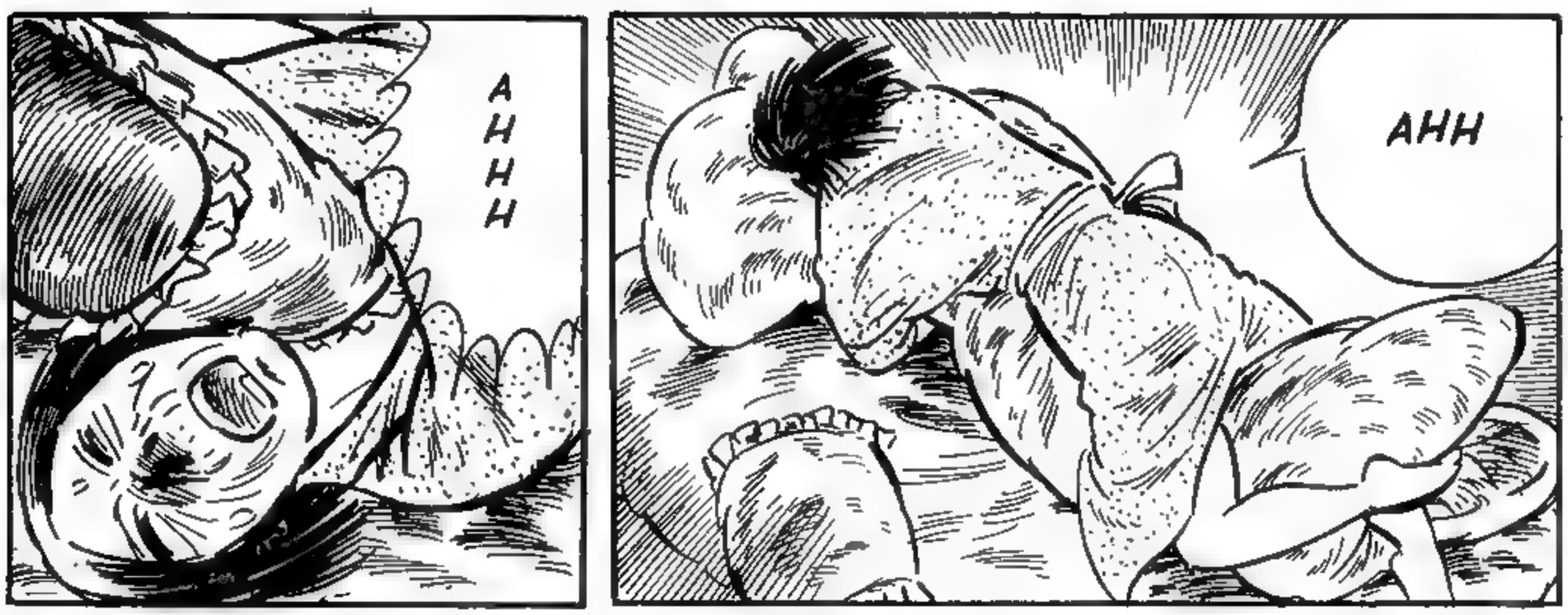
MNCH MNCH
MNCH MNCH

HAH, HE'S EATING AWAY
HA HA HA ...

FSSSH
FSSSH



URRGH
UNNGH
FSSH
FSSH
AHH


AHHH
AHH

...

WATER. IT'S SEEPING THROUGH THE WALLS.

AHHH

...

AHHH

AHHH

HUH.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I'M SORRY.

THANK YOU FOR RESCUING ME.

I WAS WONDERING IF YOU SAW A YOUNG MAN AROUND HERE SEVERAL DAYS AGO.

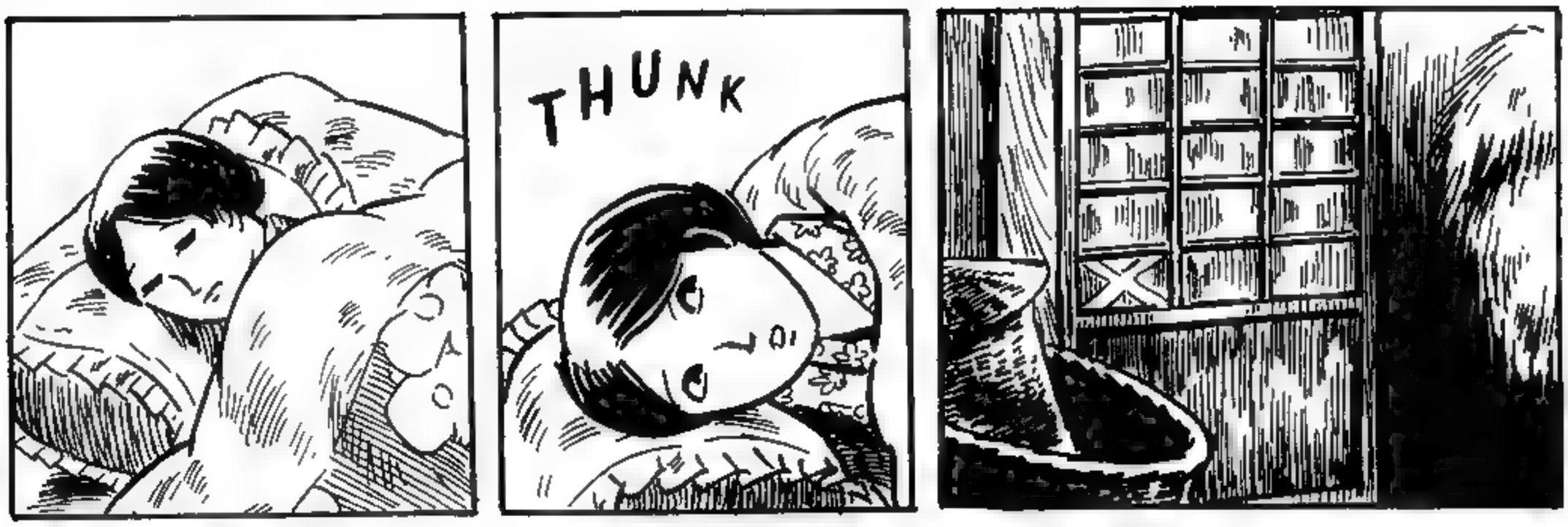
...

N-NO.

REALLY?

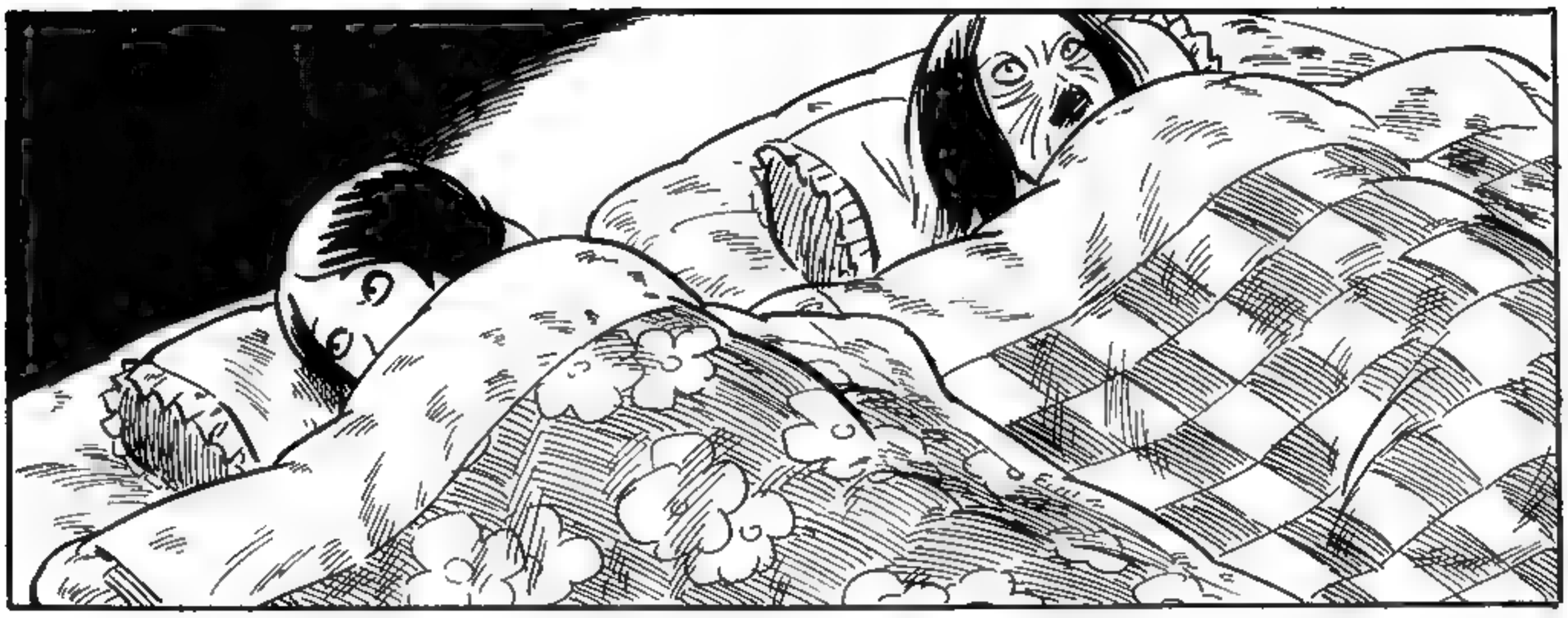
I GOT LOST TRYING TO FIND HIM.

ARE YOU WELL ENOUGH?
YES, I FEEL FINE NOW.
THE LEAST I COULD DO IS HELP YOU COOK.
WHY DON'T YOU EAT? PLEASE.
I'M NOT HUNGRY. I'LL EAT LATER.
...


THUNK

...

KLAKK
OH!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I JUST COULDN'T SLEEP.



YOUR HAND...
HM?
GIVE ME YOUR HAND.
?

OH.

THIS IS MY CHEST.
I'M ONLY TWENTY-THREE YEARS OLD.
...
MY DEFORMED FACE.
MY BLACK, STIFF CHEST.

...

IT WAS COSMETIC SURGERY.

IT UTTERLY FAILED AND RUINED MY WHOLE LIFE.

...

I DID IT ALL...

...FOR MEN. FOR MEN...

PLEASE, TELL ME... WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME!?

BECAUSE YOU'RE A MAN.

ALL RIGHT THEN! I'VE DECIDED I'LL LOVE YOU...

JUST LET ME OUT.

HA HA HA. I DON'T BELIEVE YOU.

GIVE ME SOME PROOF THAT YOU'LL NEVER BETRAY ME.

PROOF...

THAT'S RIGHT.

THEN I'LL LET YOU OUT.

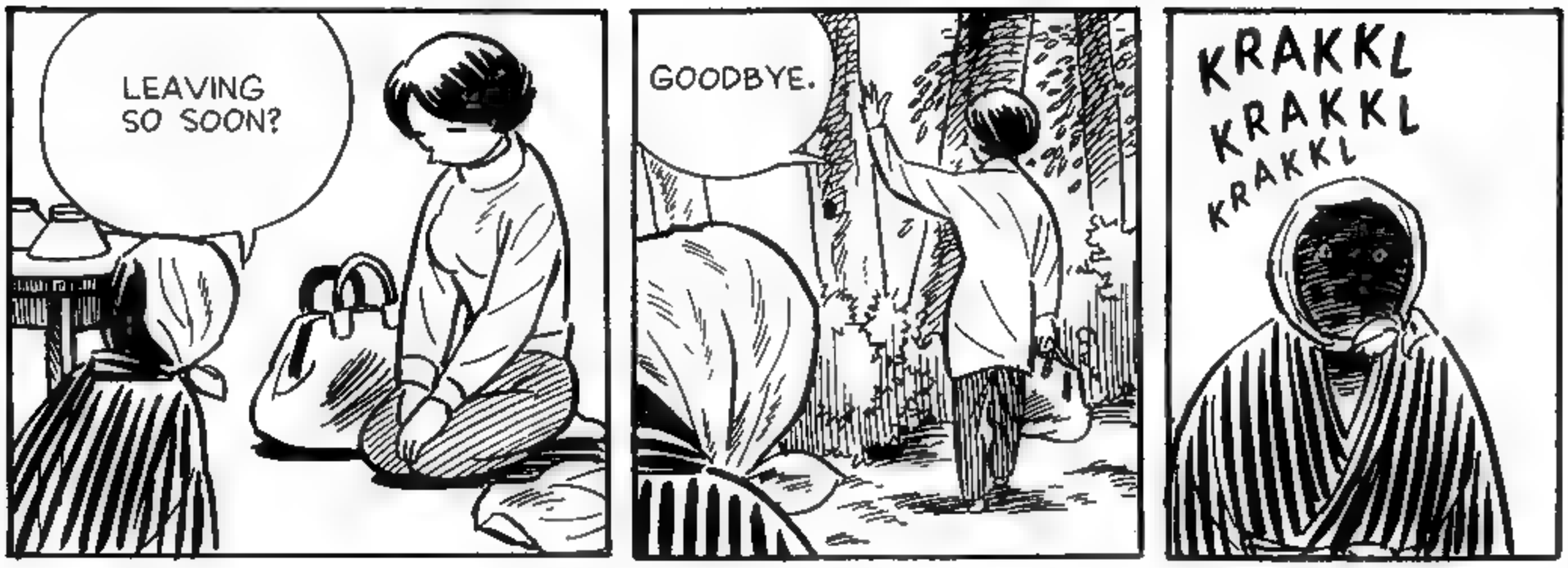
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN PROVE IT...

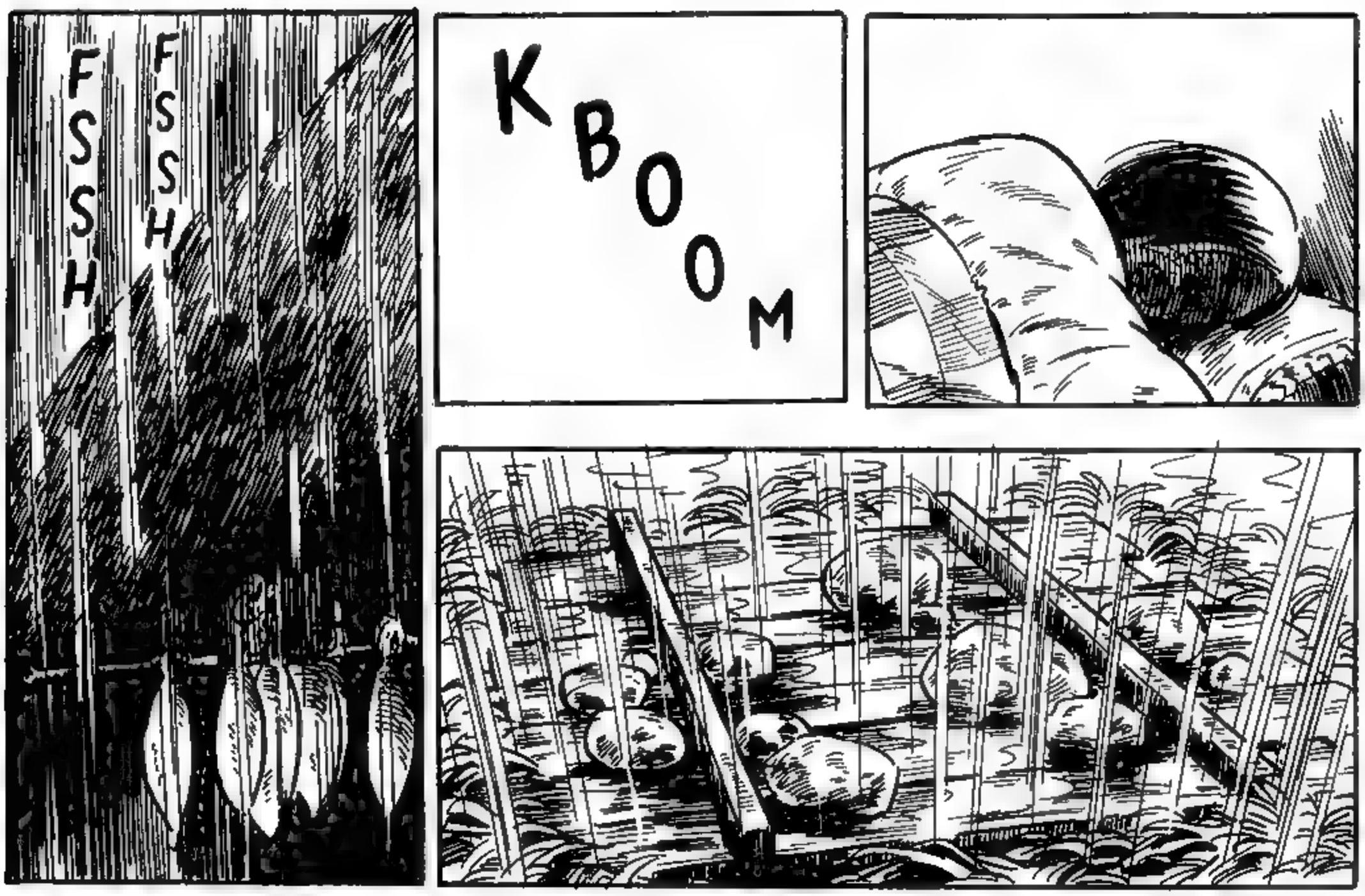
MEN CAN SAY ANYTHING WHEN THEY'RE IN A HOLE.

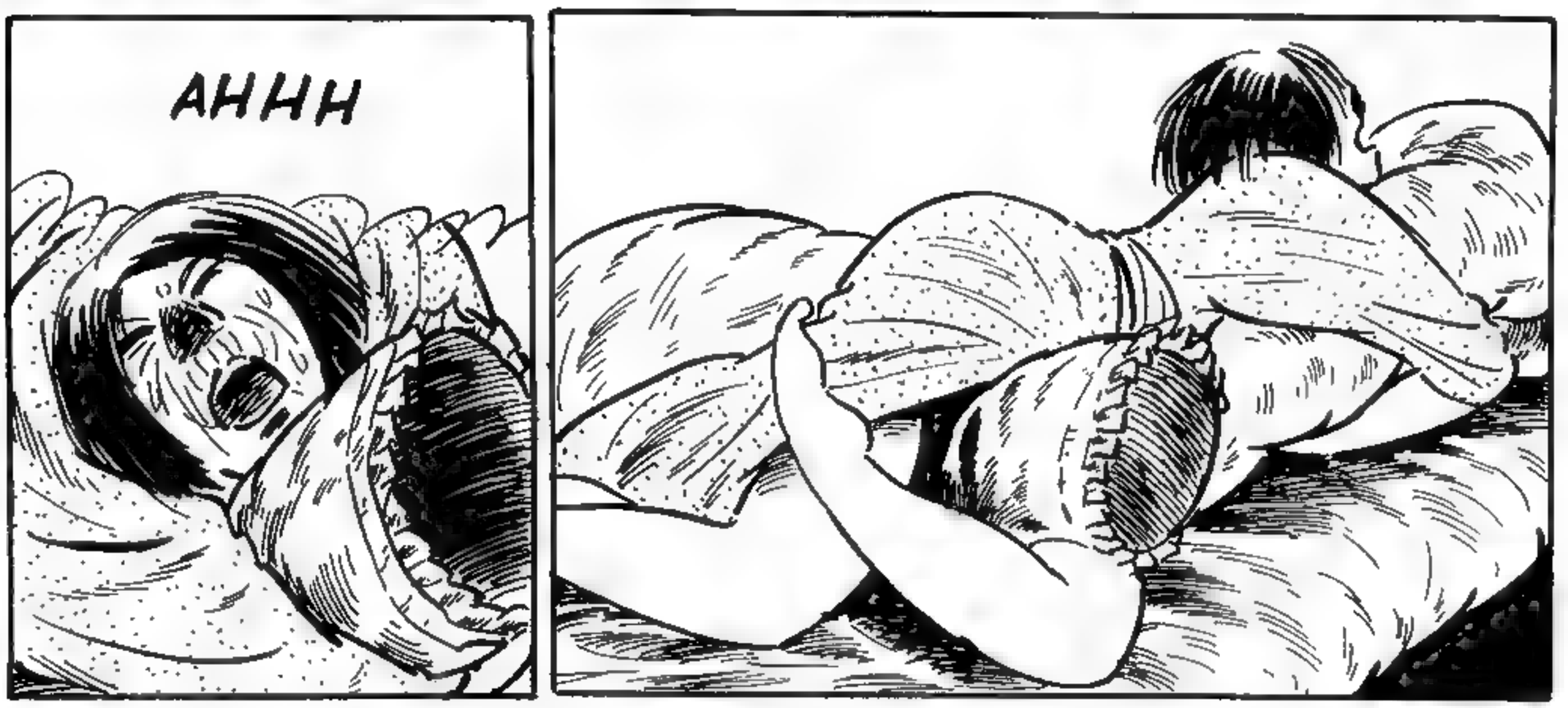
YOU CAN'T TRUST THEM ONCE THEY'RE OUT THOUGH.

THUD

NOTE: DIVORCE NOTIFICATION

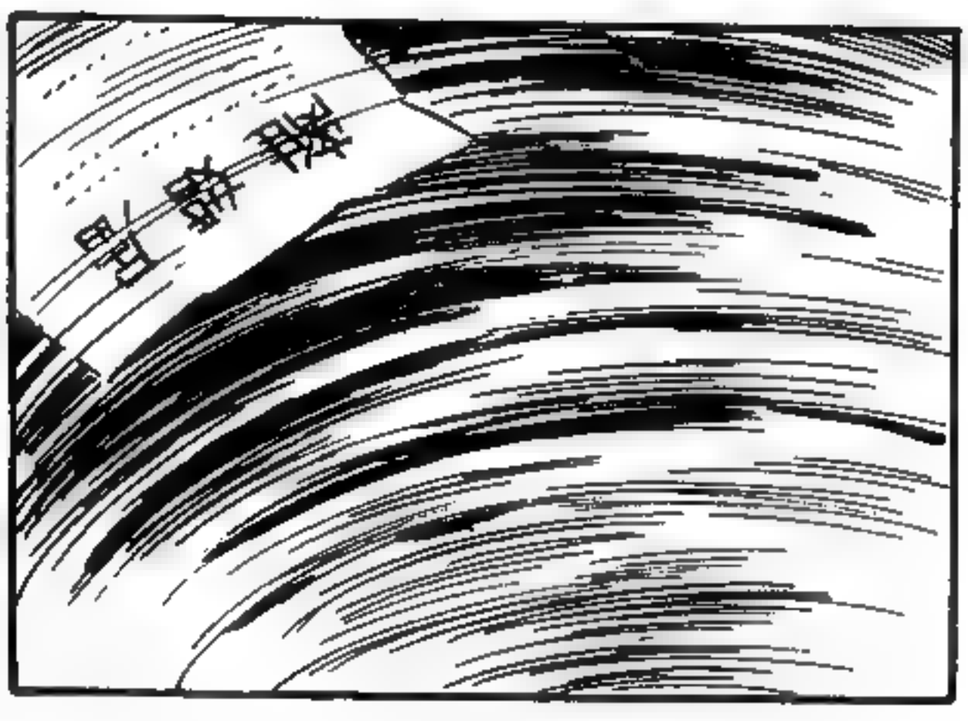

LEAVING SO SOON?
GOODBYE.
KRAKKL KRAKKL KRAKKL


FSSH FSSH
KBOOM


AHHH

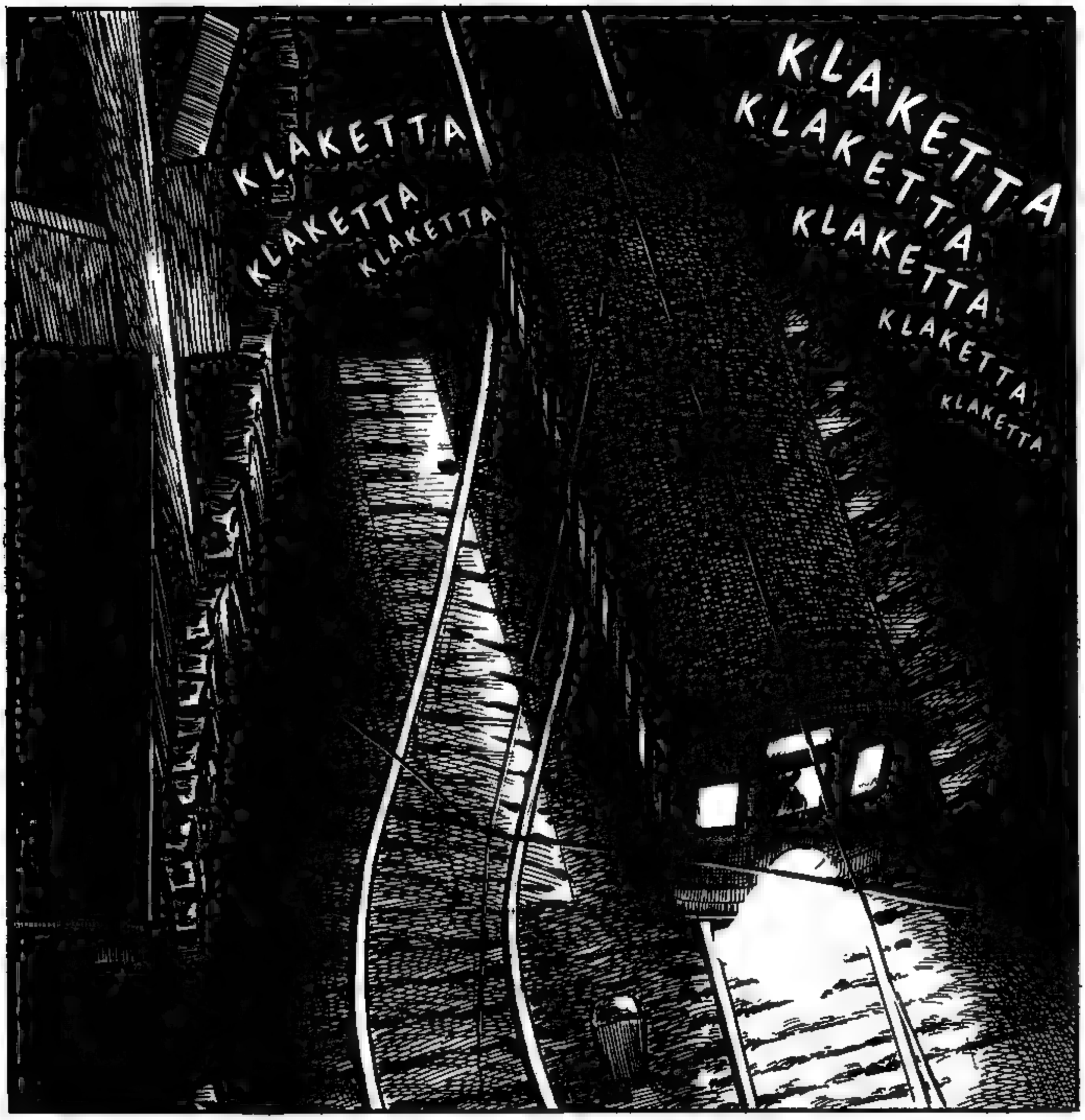
FSSH
FSSH
FSSH
FSSH

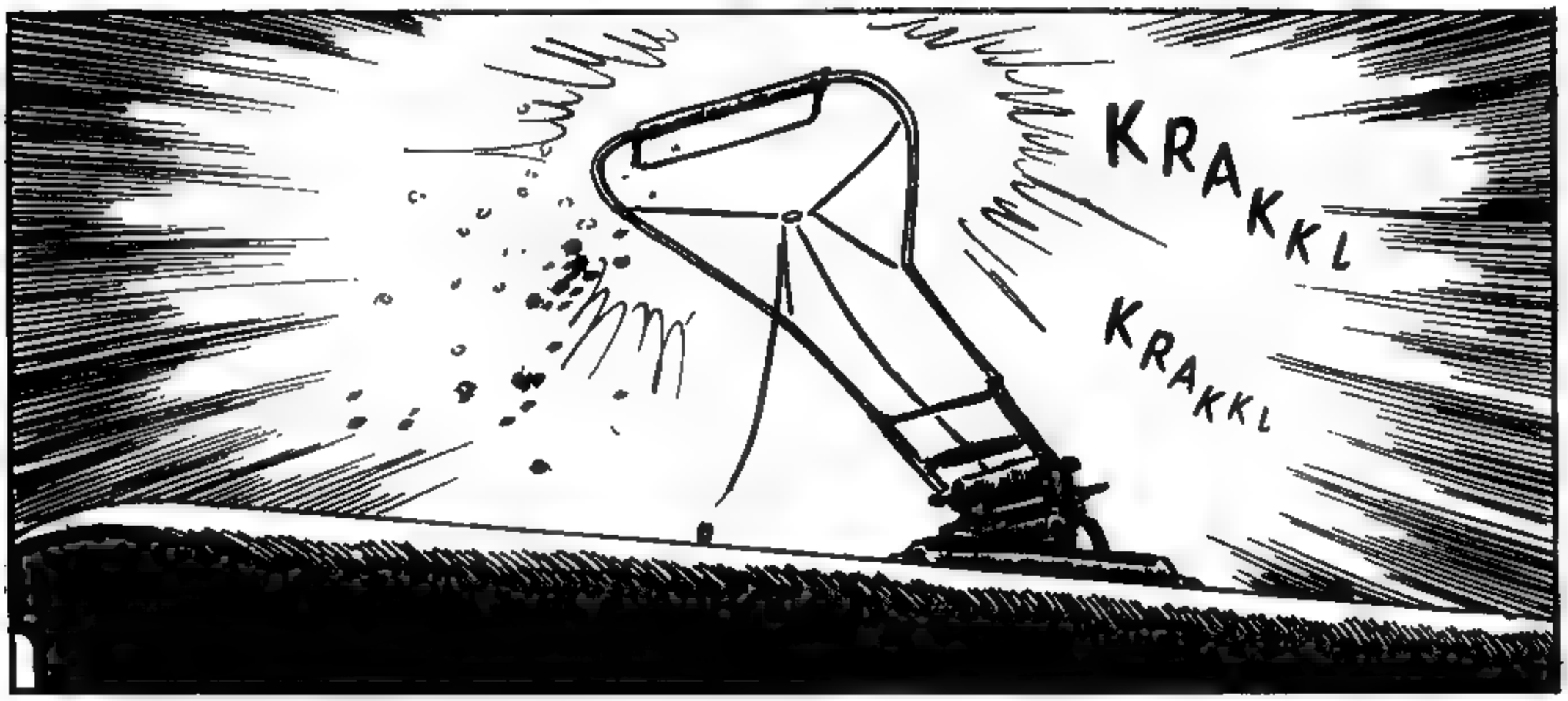
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG



NOTE: DIVORCE NOTIFICATION

FORKED ROAD


KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA


KRAKKL
KRAKKL

まり
BAR
ロン
寿司
踏切り
鳴
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA

GOOD EVENING.

BEER AND... OKAY, COMING RIGHT UP, SIR.

I WANT SAKE!

ALL RIGHT.

YOU SHOULD STOP DRINKING TONIGHT, KEN.

GO HOME.

I'M THE CUSTOMER HERE! YOU CAN'T ORDER ME AROUND, YOSHIO.

I'M NOT ORDERING YOU AROUND. I'M JUST SAYING THIS AIN'T GOOD FOR YOU.

SHUT UP! GIVE ME MORE SAKE.

IF YOU'RE NOT SERVING ME...

...THEN I'LL JUST HAVE TO DO IT MYSELF.

WUMP

KLAAKK

DAMN IT, I WANT MY SAKE! GIVE ME MORE SAKE!

HEY, OKOMA, OKOMA!

YES?

WHAT IS IT?

I NEED YOU TO PULL OUT A MATTRESS FOR THIS GUY.

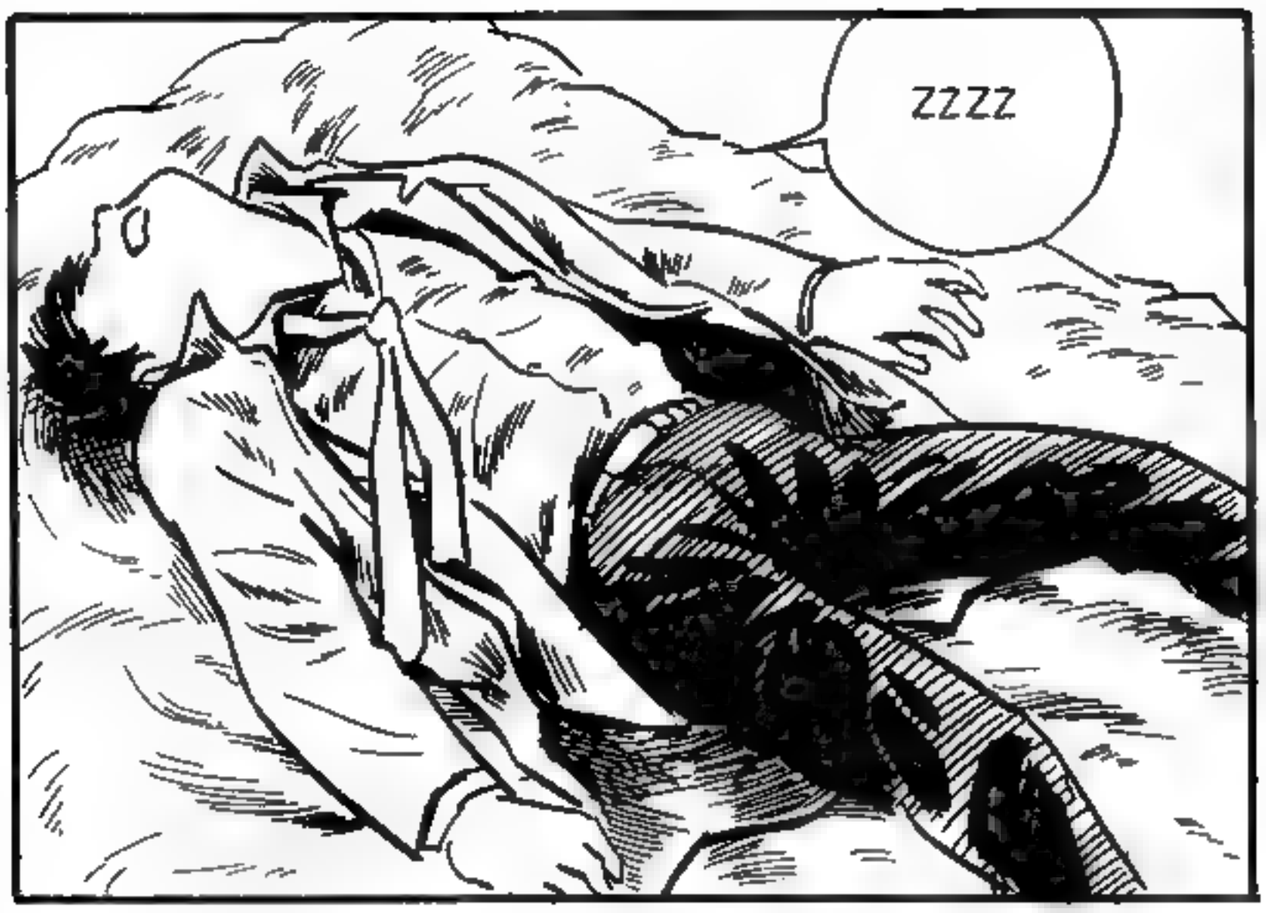
HE DRANK TOO MUCH.

HE'LL HAVE TO SLEEP A LITTLE BEFORE I SEND HIM OFF.

KEN'S BEING VERY ODD TONIGHT.

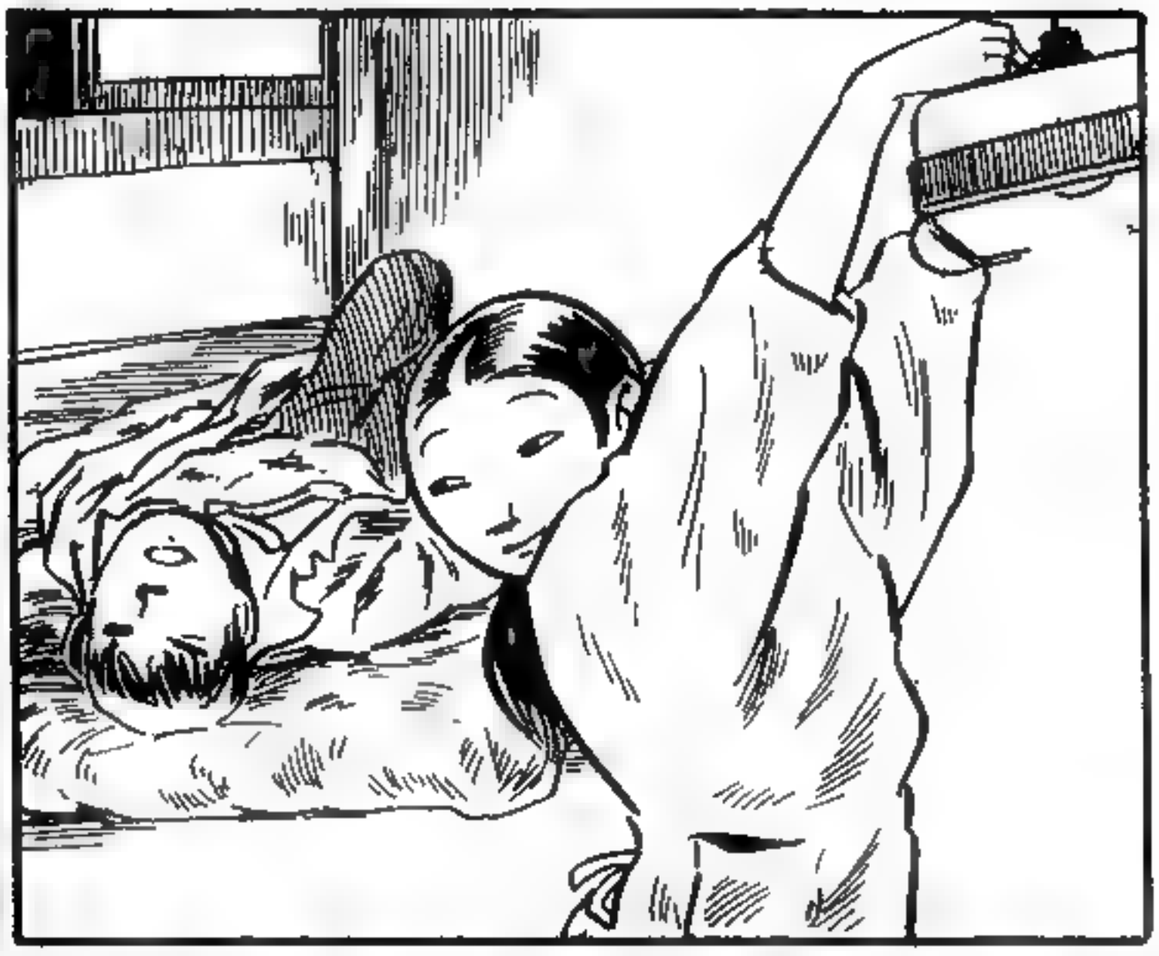
HE KEPT ON BITCHING ABOUT SOMETHING AT WORK.

OTHERWISE HE WOULDN'T BE HERE.


ZZZZ

SHOULD I GO GET A BOWL?
HE SHOULD BE ALL RIGHT.

THE NIGHT BREEZE FROM THE WINDOW WILL DO HIM SOME GOOD.



RRRRR

KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA

KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA

KLAKETTA
KLAKETTA

FSSSHH

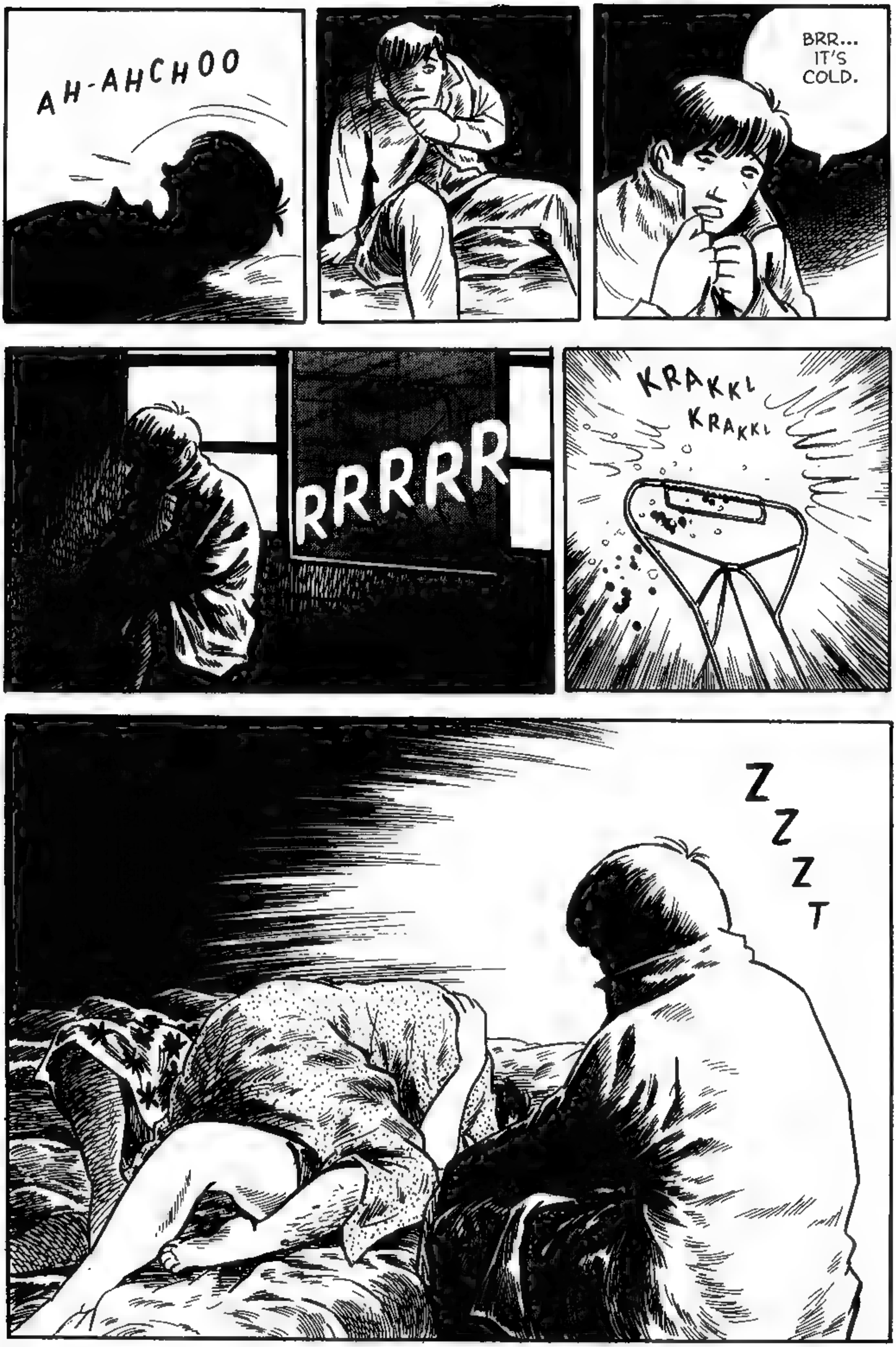
RRRRRR

KRAKKL
KRAKKL

RRRRR
RKKK

SIGN: DO NOT CROSS RAILWAY

SINGING: BANG ON THE SAUCER! IT'S MY LITTLE GONG!


AH-AHCHOO
BRR... IT'S COLD.
RRRRR
KRAKKL
KRAKKL
ZZZZT

RRRRRR
...
D
U
M
D
U
M
D
U
M
D
U
M

HUH...
F
S
H

...

DUMDUMDUMDUMDING

I HAD JUST STARTED JUNIOR HIGH BACK THEN.

踏切

YOU'RE A FRIEND OF YOSHIO'S? HE'S ASLEEP UPSTAIRS.

RIGHT UP THOSE STAIRS.

LAMP SIGN: SAKE

THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME I VISITED MY SCHOOL-MATE YOSHIO.

THE TEACHER ASKED ME TO CHECK ON YOU.

I FEEL FINE NOW.

I JUST DIDN'T FEEL LIKE GOING TO SCHOOL ANYMORE.

YOSHIO WASN'T A VERY GOOD STUDENT. HE DIDN'T PARTICULARLY STAND OUT...

BUT HIS ROOM WAS FILLED WITH FANCY CLOTHES.

THERE WERE ADULT MAGAZINES WITH NUDE PHOTOS SPRAWLED ALL OVER HIS ROOM.

I WAS ALARMED. YOSHIO SUDDENLY SEEMED VERY MATURE.

HM... LEAVING SO SOON?

COME BY ANY TIME YOU LIKE.

I'D NEVER SEEN THIS PART OF THE CITY...I FELT LIKE AN EXPLORER ENTERING THE JUNGLE.

AFTER THAT DAY, I FELT DRAWN TO YOSHIO.

HE WAS STILL A POOR STUDENT WHO DIDN'T STAND OUT.

IT WAS THE NIGHT OF A FESTIVAL.

YAHH YAHH

YAHH YAHH

FWEE BOOM

FWOO BOOM

FWEE

祭禮

THAT'S SO NASTY, HA HA HA.

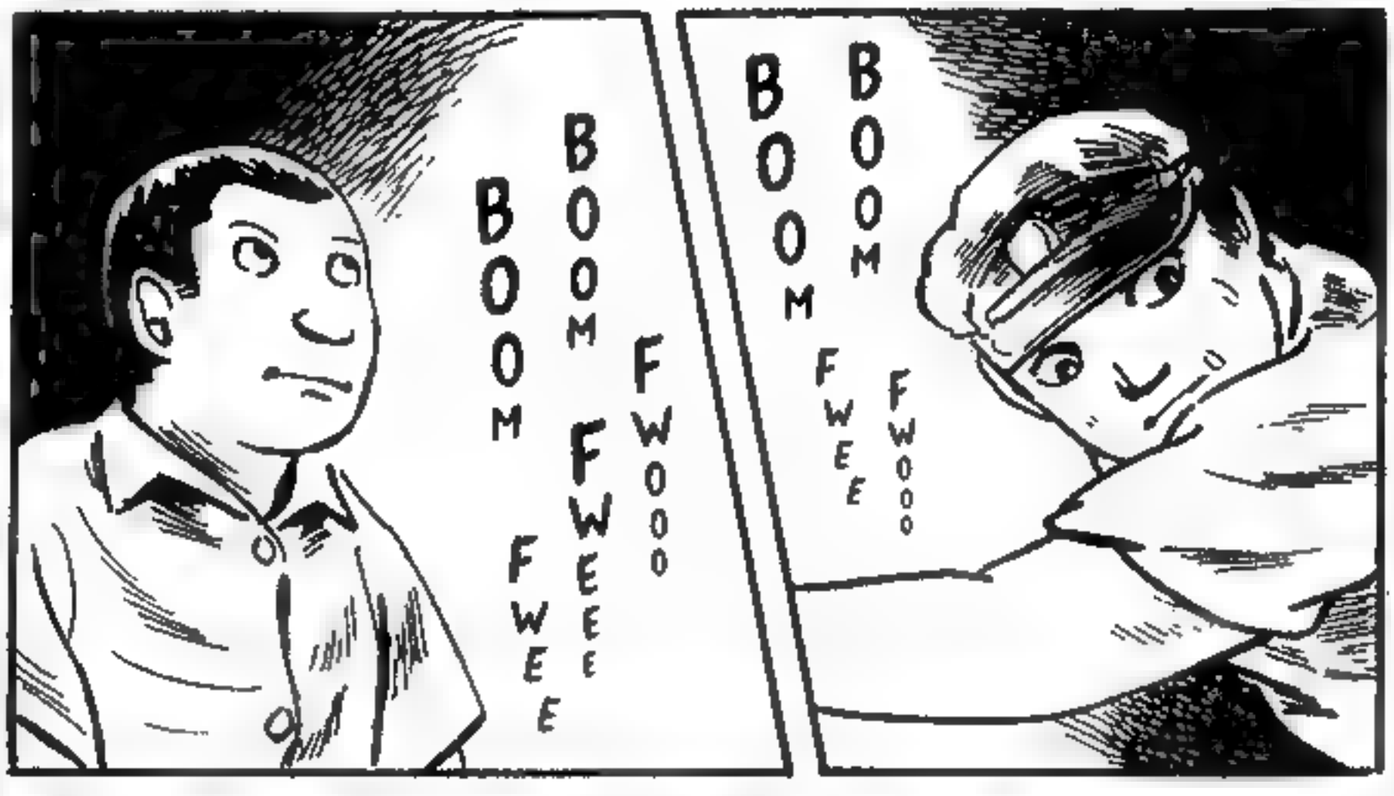
ARE YOU REALLY TAKING ME TO THE HOT SPRINGS?

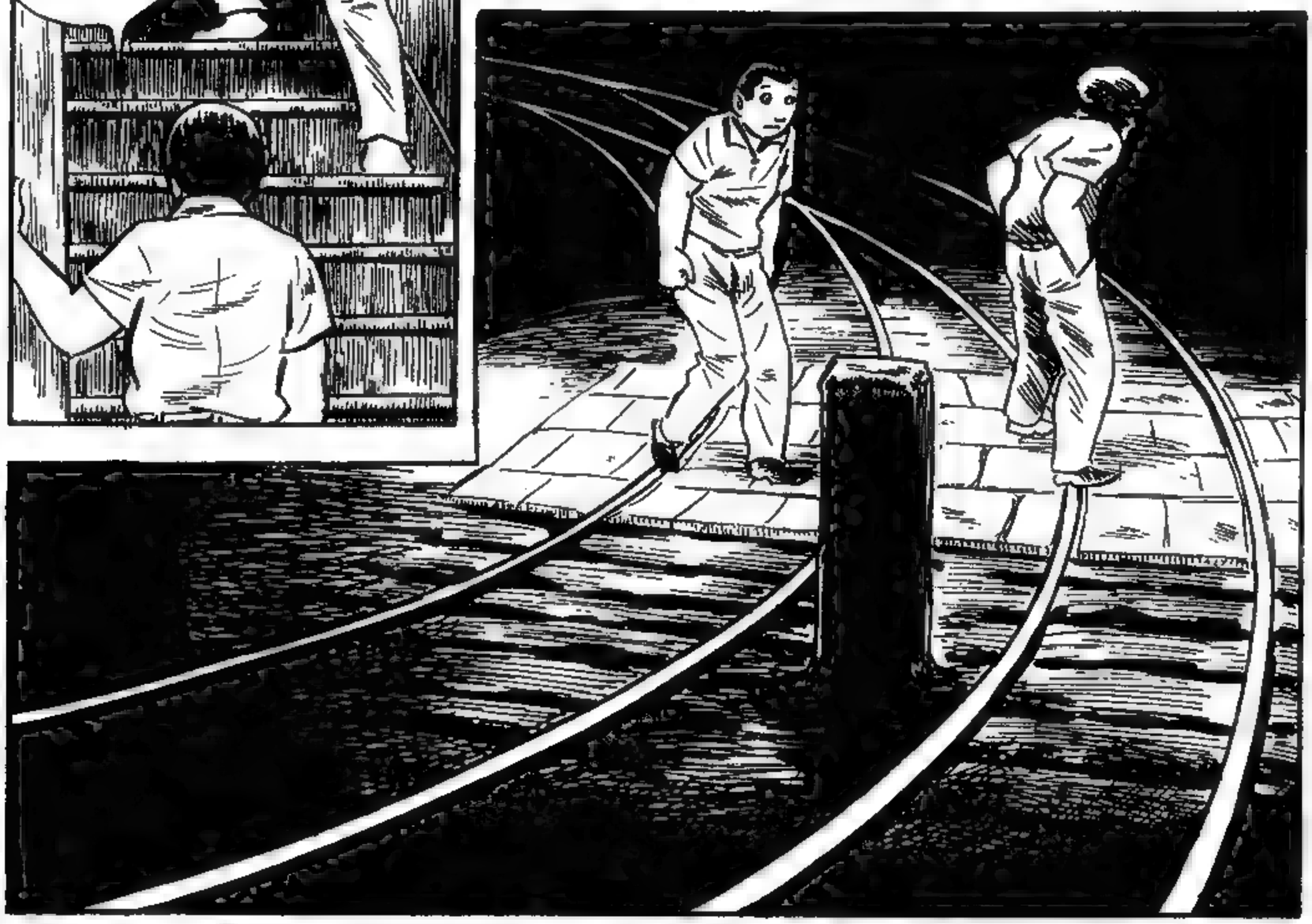
SURE.

YOSHIO.
YO-
RRRRRR
ZZZZT

RRRR

...


BOOM FWOOO
BOOM FWEEE
BOOM FWEE
BOOM FWOOO
BOOM FWEE
BOOM



I THOUGHT I SAW SOMEONE COME INTO THE ROOM.

YOU'RE JUST SEEING THINGS. YOSHIO WENT TO THE FESTIVAL.

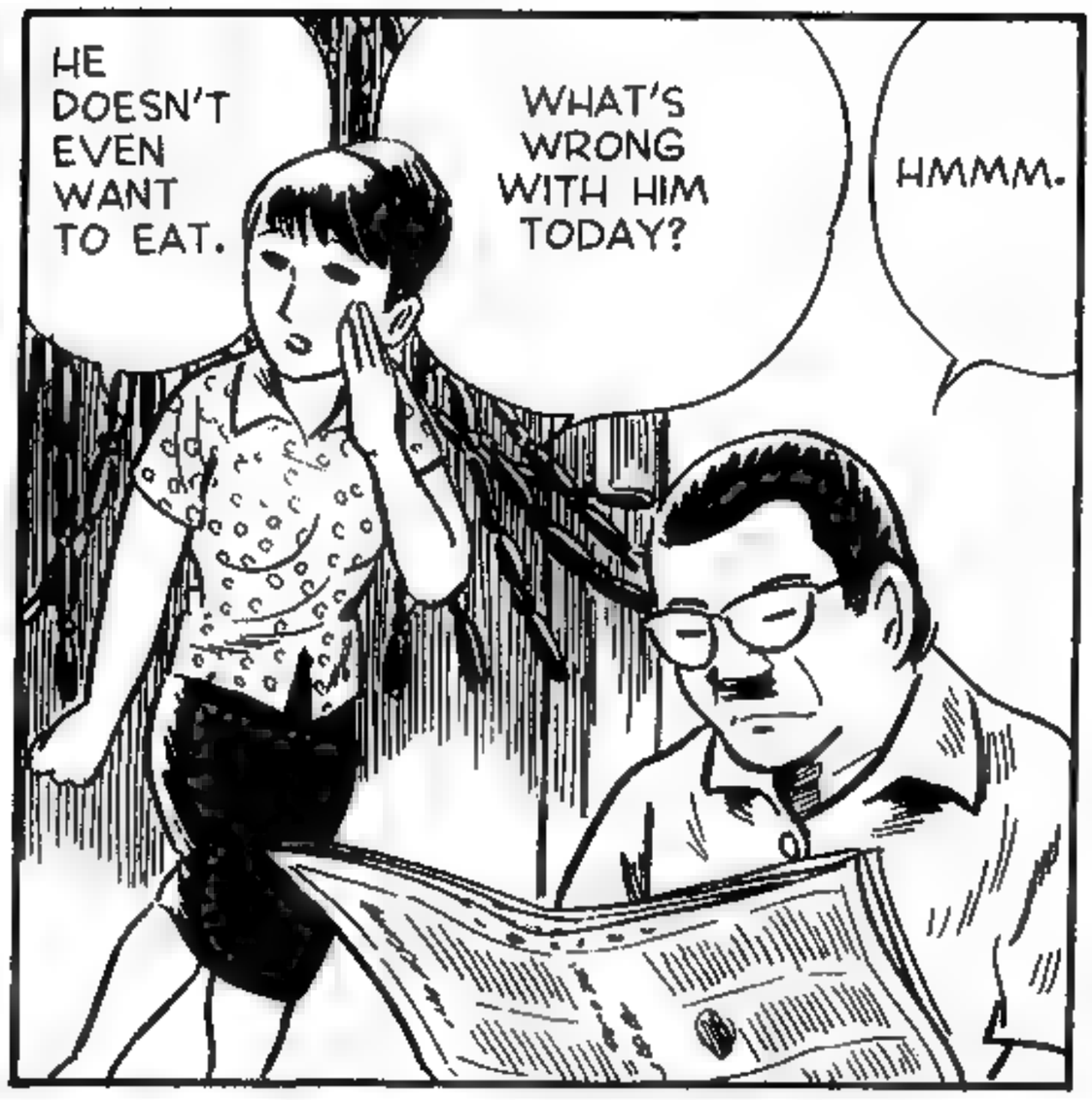
THIS WAS HOW I FIRST LEARNED WHAT MEN AND WOMEN DO. I WAS PRETTY SHAKEN.

I COULDN'T GET OVER HOW UGLY AND SAVAGE HUMANS COULD BE.

HEY, KEN... LET'S GO CHECK OUT SOME NIGHT STALLS. KEN?

ALL RIGHT, THEN... I'LL GO ALONE. SEE YA.

♪♪♫

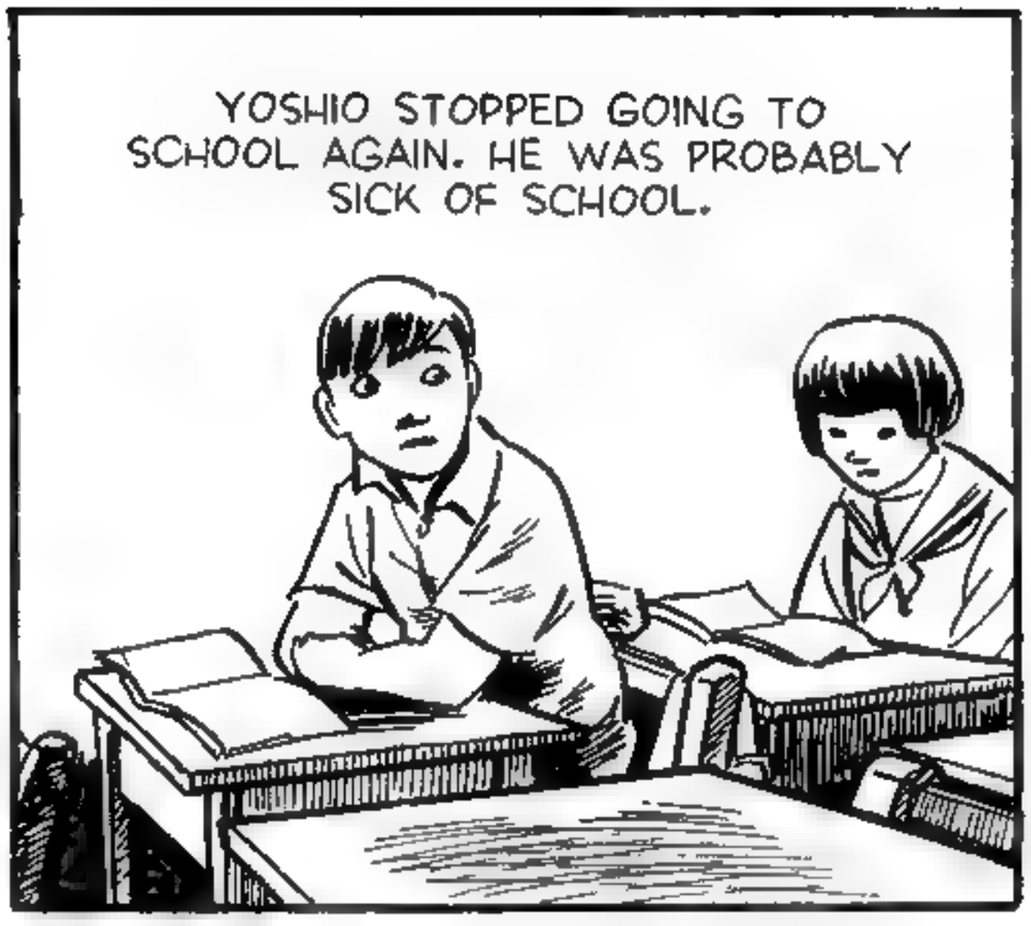

HE DOESN'T EVEN WANT TO EAT.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM TODAY?
HMMM.

I COULDN'T BELIEVE I WOULD ONE DAY END UP LIKE THEM...
I FELT LIKE I WAS COMPLETELY CURSED. I COULDN'T STAND IT.

EVEN WHEN I WENT TO BED, IMAGES OF WHITE LEGS WOULD FLASH THROUGH MY HEAD, KEEPING ME UP ALL NIGHT LONG.

I HAD TO SEE YOSHIO THE NEXT MORNING.

THIS SECRET BROUGHT US CLOSER.


YOSHIO STOPPED GOING TO SCHOOL AGAIN. HE WAS PROBABLY SICK OF SCHOOL.

IT TURNED OUT HIS MOTHER WAS INDULGING HIM.

HA HA HA HA

KLAK KLAK

TINK TINK TINK

KLAK KLAK

TINK TINK TINK

HERE YOU ARE!

YOU'RE FEELING BETTER ALREADY?

I'M SO SORRY, MA'AM.

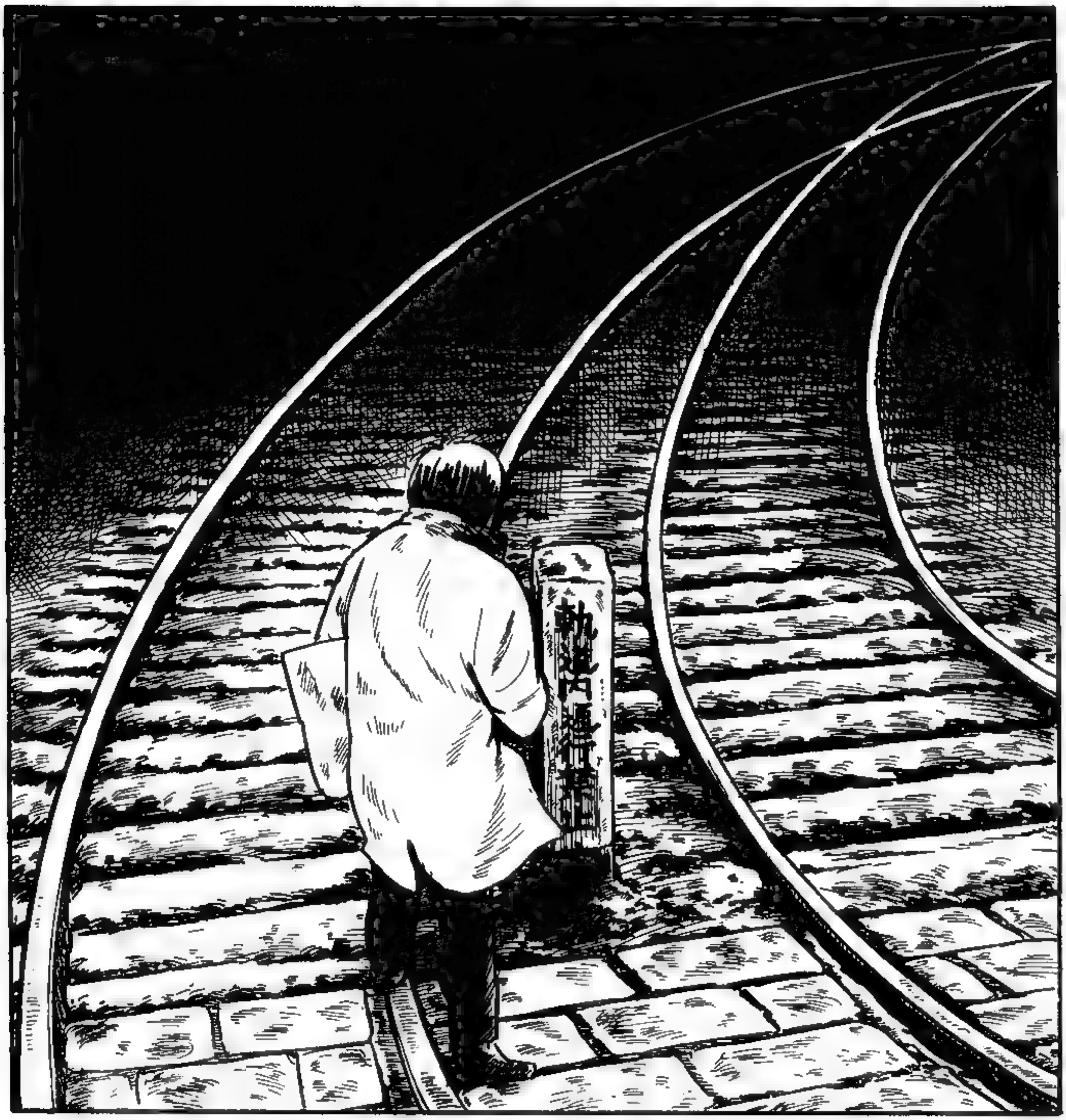
OH, COME ON. WE'RE FRIENDS.

KEN... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'LL STOP BY SOME OTHER TIME.

YOU WANT ME TO CALL A TAXI? THE LAST TRAM ALREADY LEFT.

NAH, I'LL JUST WALK HOME.

HEY, SPEAKING OF THE TRAM... I HEARD THEY'RE GOING TO SHUT IT DOWN.



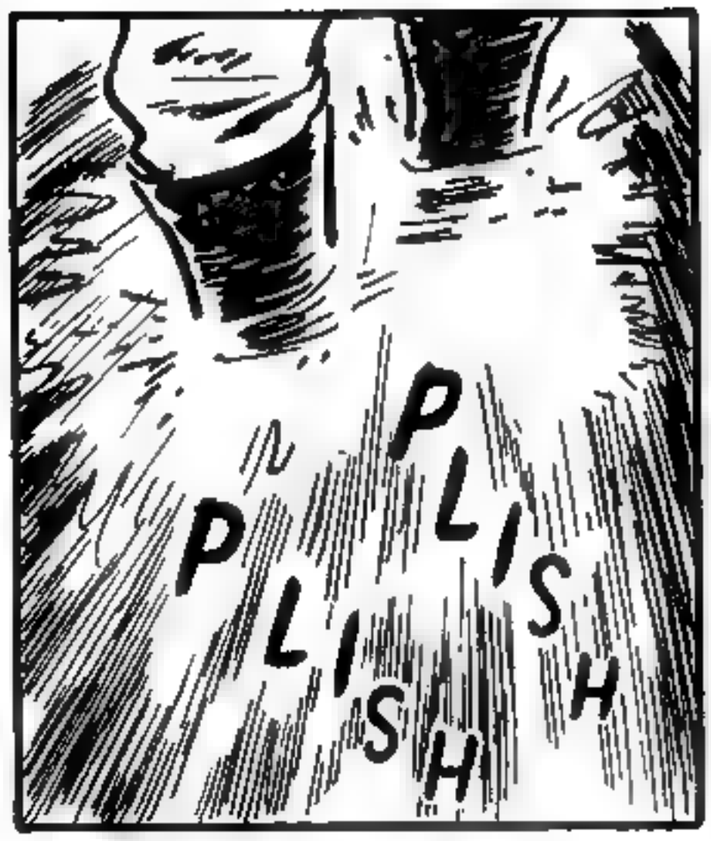
EEL

FSSSHHH
THERE THEY ARE. THEY'RE BOTH WHIZZING RIGHT BY.

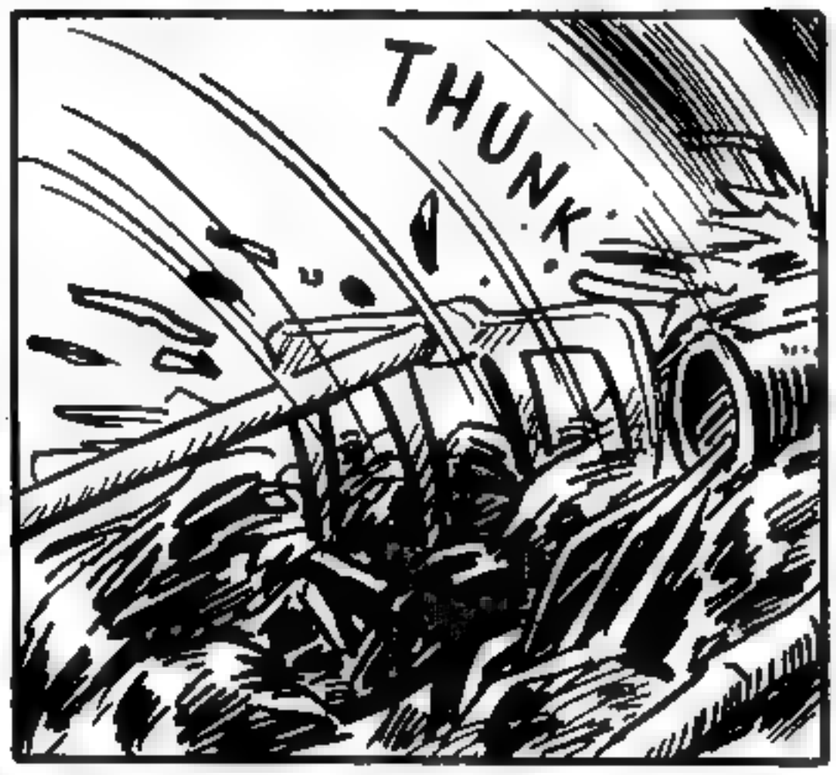
IT'S AMAZING THAT EELS COULD SURVIVE HERE.
INCREDIBLE.

FSSSHHH

COME ON... LET'S GET TO WORK.


PLISH
PLISH

THE WATER LEVEL'S UP FROM YESTERDAY'S RAIN.
SO BE CAREFUL.


THUNK

FSSH

FSSH
FSSH

GLUG
GLUG

PLISH

YOU'RE GONNA QUIT THIS JOB, RIGHT?

WELL, IT SHOULDN'T BE PERMANENT.

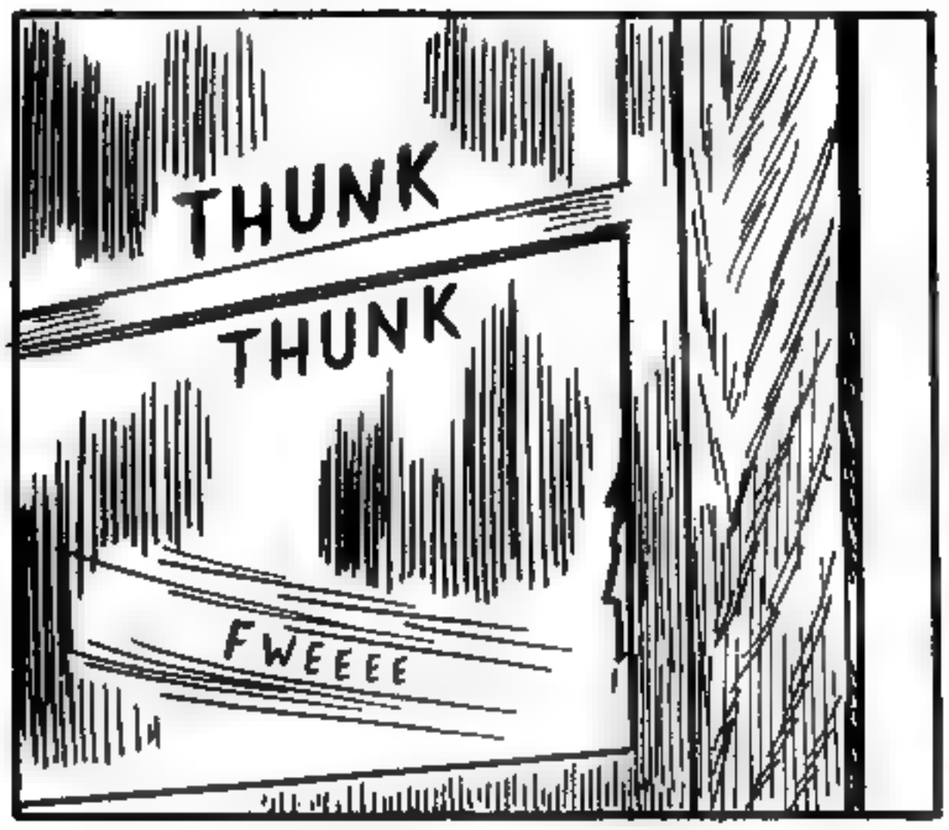
YOU'RE STILL YOUNG.

BESIDES, YOU'RE GONNA BE A DAD SOON.

SEE YOU LATER.

DOOR: WORKERS' BATHROOM

HEY, IT MOVED AGAIN.
MAYBE IT'S JUST ME.
NO, OUR BABY REALLY DID MOVE...
WE REALLY NEED TO GET A STOVE SOON, OKAY?
BRRR! AREN'T YOU COLD?


THUNK
THUNK
FWEEEE

THIS CRUMMY APARTMENT'S NOT GOOD FOR THE BABY.
BRRR

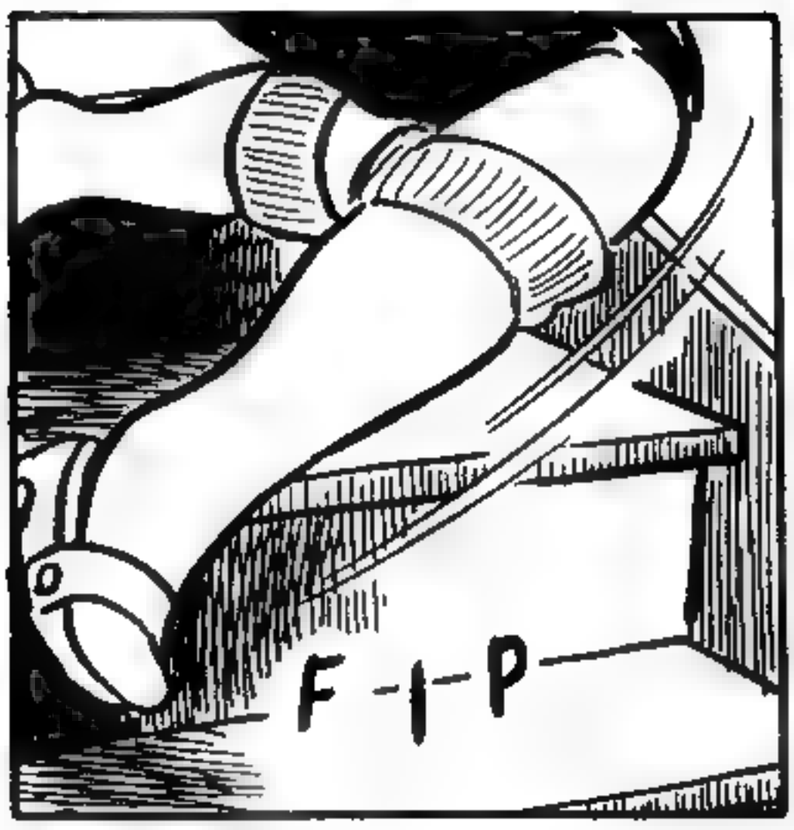
I CAN'T WORK AT THE BAR WITH A KID.
GEEZ, I LOOK AWFUL...

WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO FIND A JOB?
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?

I'M GOING TO THE BATH-HOUSE.

階段は。

KREEK


F-I-P

KRRSH
THUNK
KATHUNK

AAAHHH... MY STOMACH!

I'M SORRY, BUT YOUR WIFE HAD A MISCARRIAGE.

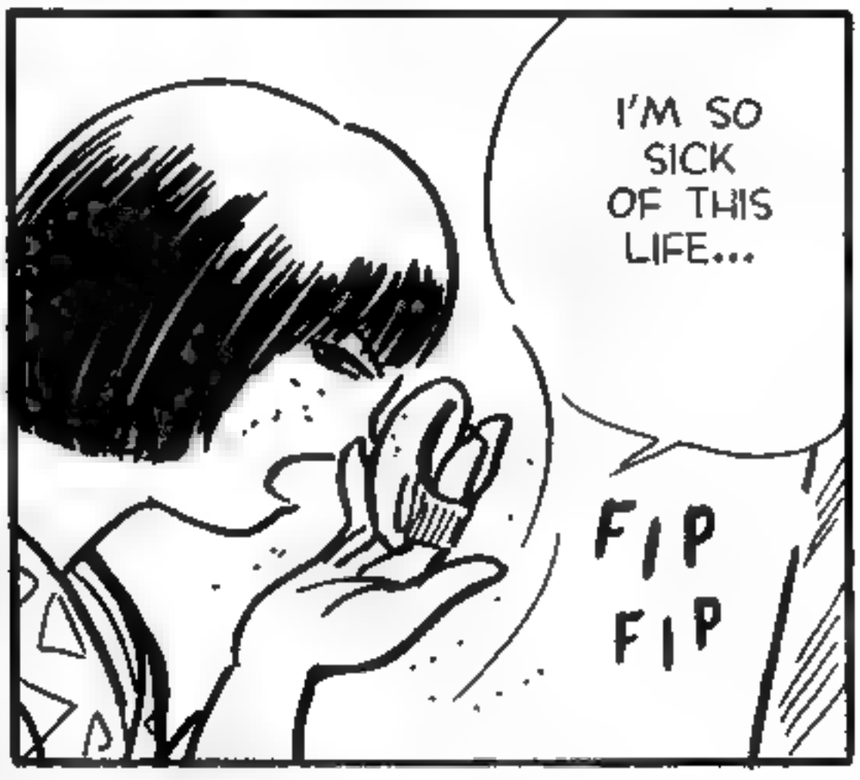
215

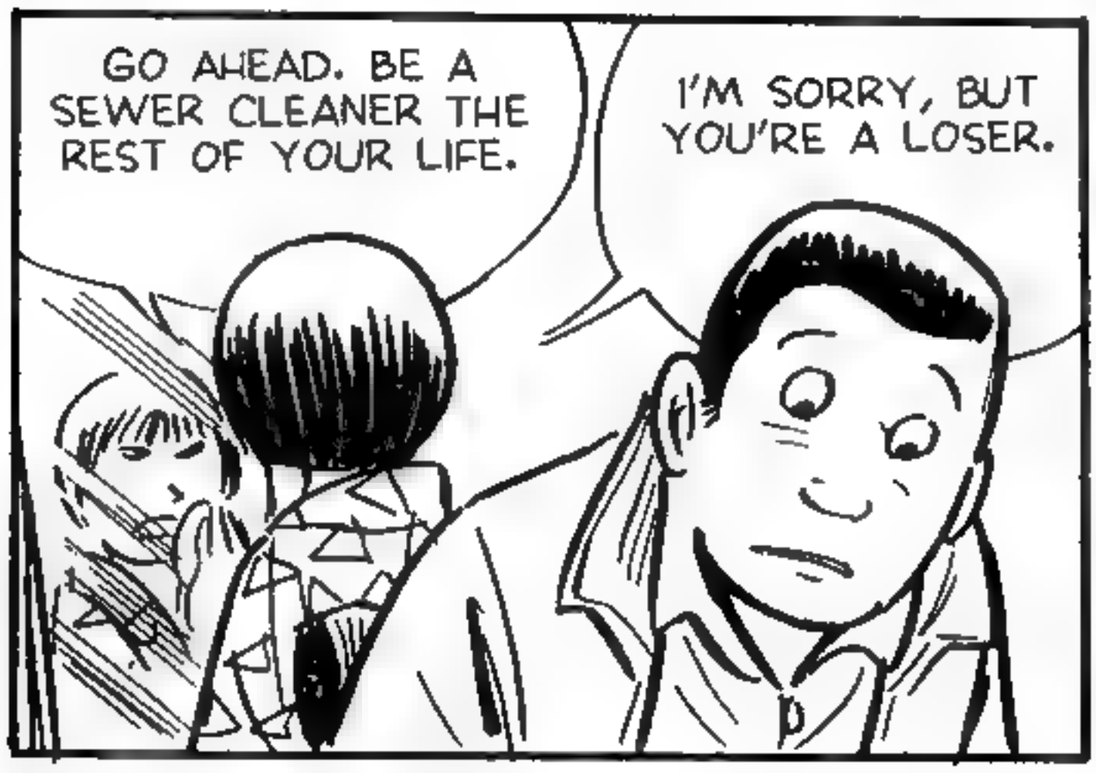
SIGN: CITY HOSPITAL

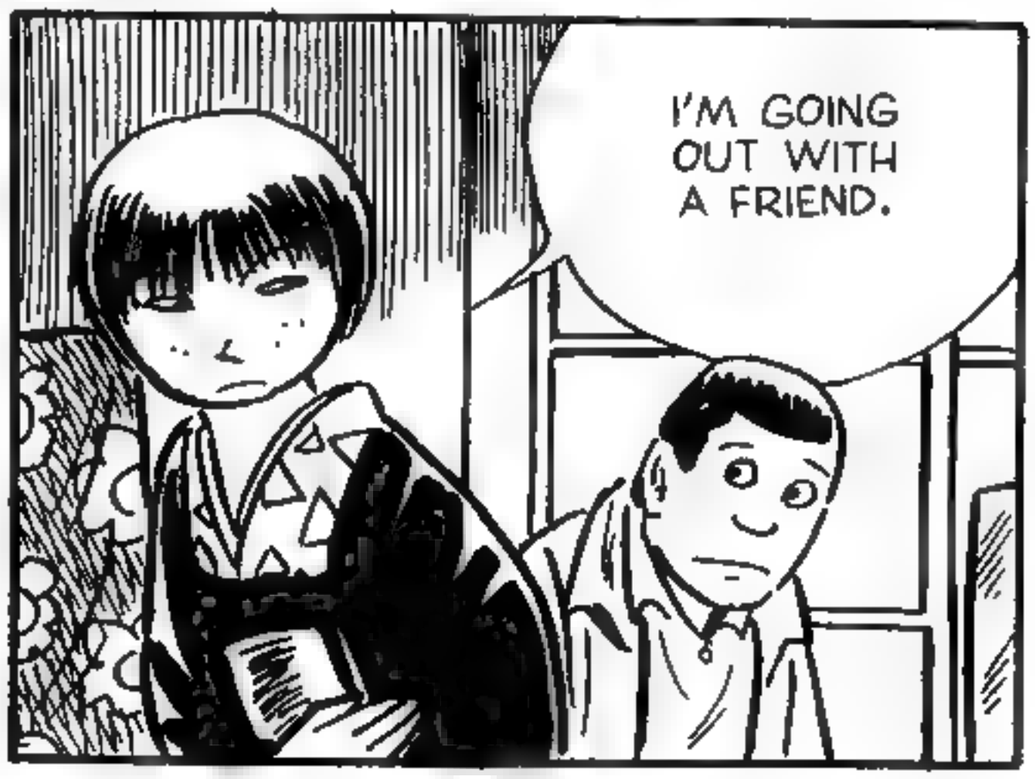
STARING AT THOSE EELS AGAIN, HUH?
THEY PROBABLY ESCAPED FROM THE EEL SHOP IN TSUKIJI...
NO ONE TRIES TO CATCH THEM THOUGH...
YOU KNOW WHY? BECAUSE THEY CAN RELATE TO THEM.
THIS AIN'T NO PLACE FOR EELS.
BUT STILL...
...THEY'RE TOUGH ENOUGH TO SURVIVE, AND THEY KEEP LOOKING FOR A CLEANER PLACE.

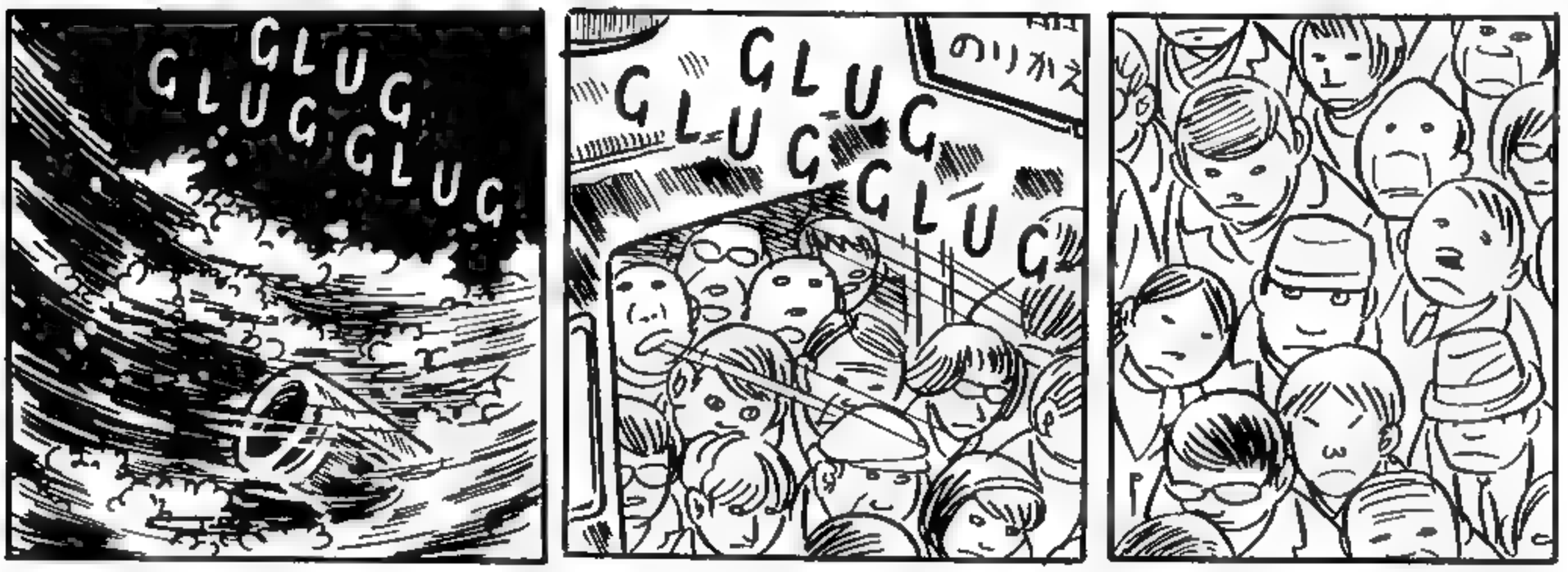
YOU CAN'T LET YOURSELF BE DRAGGED DOWN.

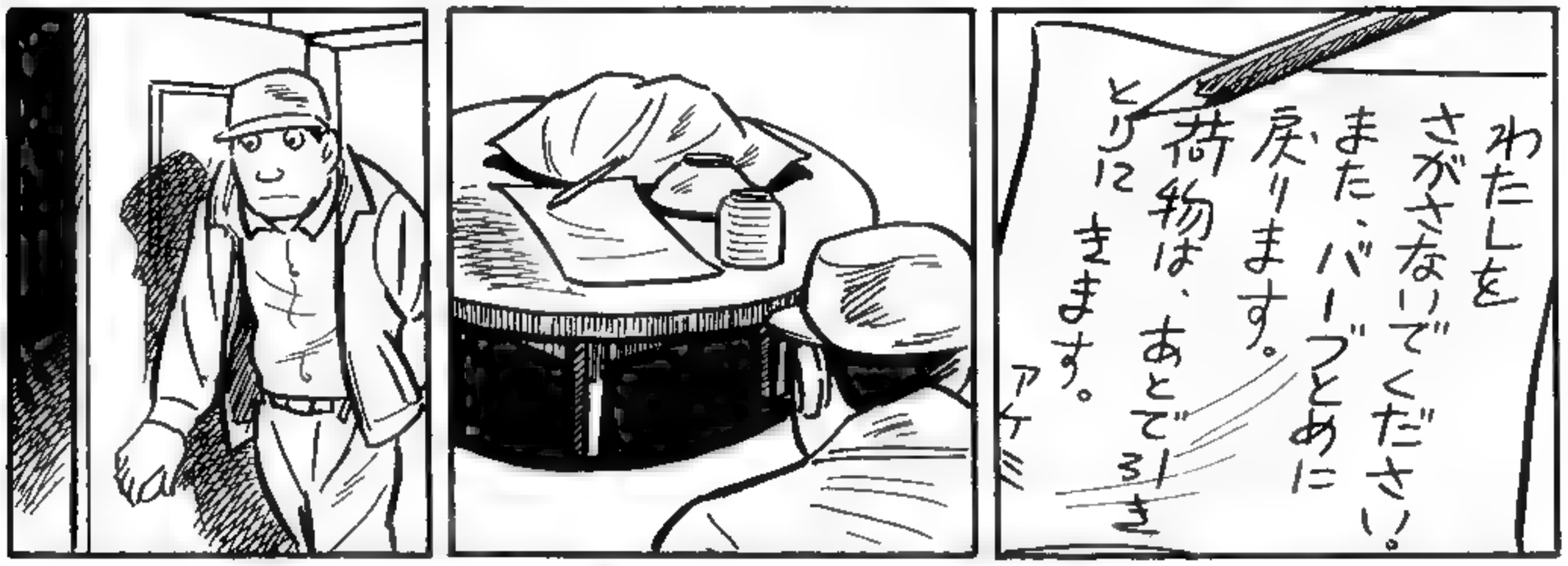
I GET THE FEELING THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE TELLING US.







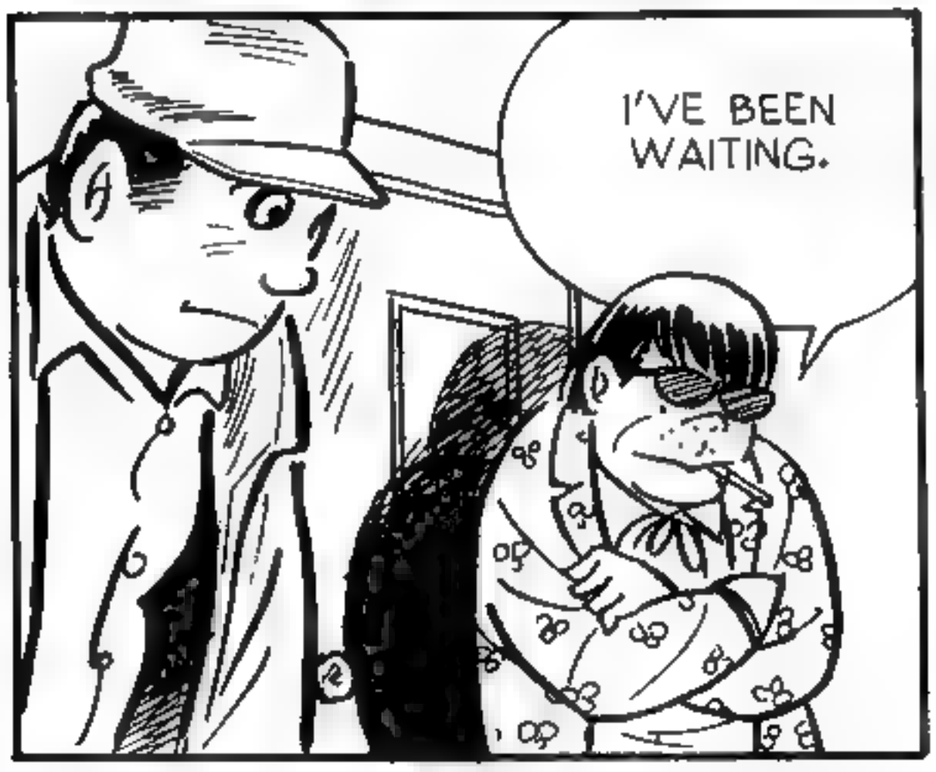




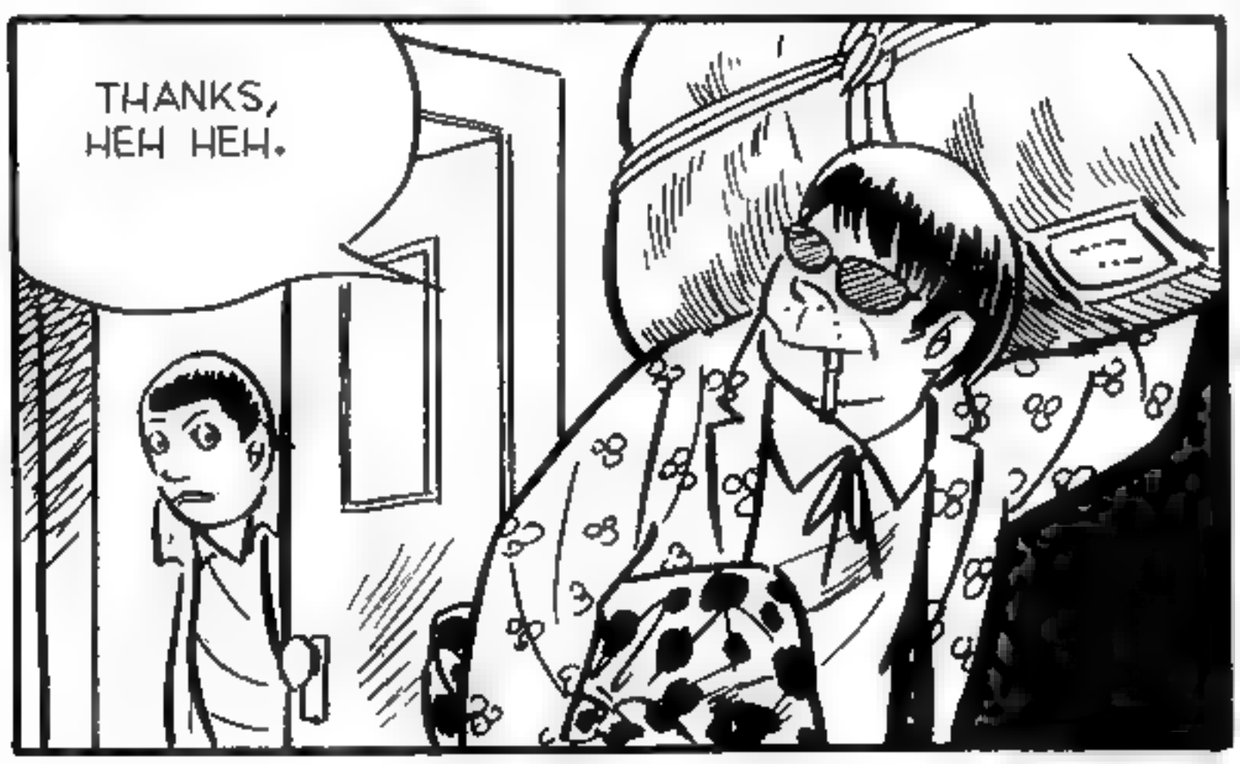
NOTE: DON'T LOOK FOR ME. I'VE GONE BACK TO WORK AS A HOSTESS. I'LL COME BACK FOR MY THINGS LATER.

FSSH
FSSH

KREEK


I'VE BEEN WAITING.

I'M HERE TO TAKE AKEMI'S STUFF...


THANKS, HEH HEH.

FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP

FSSSH
FSSSH

Q & A with YOSHIHIRO TATSUMI

This written interview was conducted by series editor Adrian Tomine in January, 2006 with the invaluable assistance of Mitsuhiro Asakawa, Beatrice Marechal, and Yuji Oniki.

ADRIAN TOMINE: *Some of the stories in this book seem to be darker in tone than your previous work, and some might say, more shocking. The scene involving the man and the dog in "Unpaid," for example, will probably take some readers by surprise. "The Hole" could be described as an allegorical horror story. Do you have any thoughts on this evolution in your work?*

YOSHIHIRO TATSUMI: These new stories marked a breakthrough and rekindled my passion for *gekiga*.[1] I pursued and refined this style with the stories in this collection. I was really thrilled by this burst of creativity. My creative output for 1970 came to 500 pages. The idea for the man seeking salvation from a dog in "Unpaid" was based on an article I read in a trashy magazine. I could relate to a part of this story about "a man who can only seek solace from a dog." It wasn't based on my own experience. I wrote this story for a cheap adult magazine. On the other hand, I drew "Abandon the Old in Tokyo" and "Beloved Monkey" for the children's weekly *manga* magazine *Shonen Magajin*. I wrote "The Hole," "Forked Road," and "Occupied" for an underground monthly called *Garo*. *Garo* didn't put any restrictions on their artists so we had complete control like literary authors. My work really wasn't for the mainstream audience.

AT: *It should also be noted that there's still a streak of black humor running through a lot of these stories. "Occupied," for example, has some very funny sequences. How did you arrive at this mixture of humor and drama in your work?*

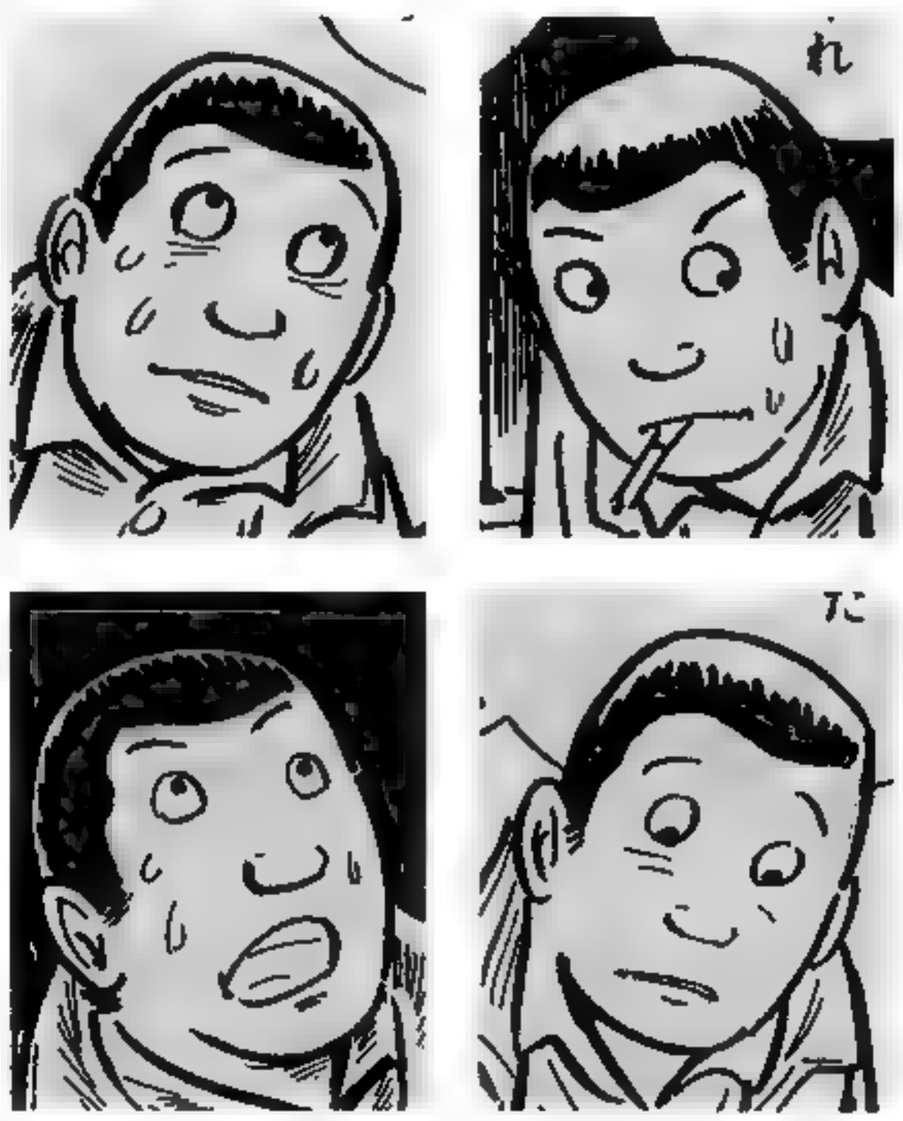
YT: My basic approach was to come up with a "bleak story" *gekiga* style that completely eliminated the requisite gags and humor so prominent in mainstream *manga*. The gag style defied realism. Unlike my contemporaries, I felt no need to incorporate humor into serious stories. I wanted to represent reality. But before I worked on narrative comics, I drew four-panel or single-panel comics that were

[1] Translated literally as "dramatic pictures," *gekiga* is a term Tatsumi coined in 1957 to describe the darker, more realistic style of cartooning that he and his peers were pioneering. *Gekiga* might best be thought of as a style or genre within the broader term of *manga*, in the way that "underground" or "alternative" are subsets of the term "comics."

humor-oriented. So when I first started submitting my work to assorted magazines, I ended up incorporating humor into my *gekiga*. It wasn't black humor, just straight humor. I still believe humor is crucial to storytelling.

AT: *These stories of yours were published around the same time as the onset of the "underground comix" movement in America, and your work and the American undergrounds seem to share some common qualities. Were you familiar with the new types of comic books that were being produced in America during the late–'60s, early–'70s? (I'm thinking, for example, of artists like Robert Crumb, Art Spiegelman, Justin Green, etc.)*

YT: Japan was destitute after World War II, but by the late–'60s, it entered its period of high–growth economics. Economic development was considered more important than the way people actually lived their lives. I wanted to depict this situation. I wasn't even aware of the term "underground comix." It shows how ignorant I am. I have never heard of some of these American authors. It's really too bad I was never exposed to this new genre of comics.



AT: *Can you talk a little about this sort of archetypal Tatsumi character? I assume that he's not supposed to be the same person, but the protagonist in a handful of these stories (for example: "Beloved Monkey," "Abandon the Old in Tokyo," "Eel") is drawn in a similar manner. Do you think of him as the same person, or is he, perhaps, simply representative of a certain type?*

YT: The character that looks identical throughout my work is, of course, different in each story, but he essentially represents my view. You could say I projected my anger about the discrimination and inequality rampant in our society through him. Do you see why my protagonists couldn't possibly be handsome?

AT: *Since both this book and* The Push Man *were comprised of short stories, I'm wondering if you ever drew any longer stories. I've heard of one book entitled* Black Blizzard, *but I think that was published very early in your career. Have there been other "graphic novels" (as they're now known in America), or have you mostly focused on short stories?*

YT: I wrote the book–length story *Black Blizzard* for *manga* lending shops.[2] I have twenty other book–length *manga* I wrote for lending shops. When I was working on the short stories in this collection in the '70s, none of the magazine publishers had much faith in my work so I only got short story assignments. I started getting full–length story requests (serialized in magazines) around 1974. I even have a long story that is over 1,000 pages in length.

AT: *I think that some North Americans have a rather limited view of Japanese comics...a lot of what gets translated into English seems to be geared more towards younger readers or fans of fantasy/adventure stories.*

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[2]Popular in the 1950s and '60s, *manga* lending shops operated similarly to today's video rental stores: the customer borrowed comics in exchange for a small fee.

Some people have told me, after reading The Push Man, *that they had no idea that this sort of material existed. Can you think of other Japanese cartoonists who, like you, have produced personal, artistic comics for adults? Or, more generally, are there certain Japanese cartoonists that Americans might not be aware of, but should be?*

YT: To be honest, I don't read other *manga* artists in Japan. Once again, I am so ignorant [when it comes to what's out there]. I'm sure there are many talented *manga* artists, but I don't know any I could recommend. I'll start looking around, though, so I can inform you.

AT: *In our previous interview (published in* The Push Man*), you emphasized the fictional nature of your work by saying, "Please do not interpret these stories as representative of the author's personality." I'm wondering if there are any stories of yours that you'd consider to be explicitly autobiographical, and, if so, could you describe them?*

YT: There are some short stories where I make brief appearances. For example, there's the kid who tosses rocks at the American soldier and the Japanese woman in "Good–Bye."[3] Also, *A Drifting Life in Gekiga* is autobiographical. I began drawing it in 1995, so I've been working on it for 11 years. (Part One, approximately 800 pages long, will be completed this year.) This first part covers my life between the mid–'40s and late–'50s, starting with my first publication within the world of *manga* lending shops and ending when I coined the term *gekiga*. Part Two will depict my struggle with *gekiga* in the late–'60s when I drew for young men's magazines, and it will be approximately 240 pages long.

AT: *In 2005, you traveled to France to be a guest of honor at the Angouleme comics festival. Can you talk a bit about that experience?*

YT: I'd already been to Angouleme twice, once in 1982 and again in 1984. So it had been 21 years since my last visit. Meeting so many people and participating in all these interviews and talks was really important to me. It was really wonderful to see how comics are loved all over the world. For someone who's worked in this profession for a while, it was also a source of pride. I was so lucky to be invited. It was such a nice, extravagant trip. A big "*merci!*" to the Angouleme staff.

AT: *In the past year, I've talked to a lot of people who told me how much they enjoyed and appreciated* The Push Man. *I'm sure they would've rather been speaking directly to you, but in lieu of that, I just wanted to pass on the praise to you, and let you know that there's a very enthusiastic audience for your work in North America.*

YT: I owe it all to you and Drawn & Quarterly. I am so grateful they published these wonderful editions of my work. I can't believe I have a dedicated readership in America, but if it's true, then I can't sleep with my feet pointed in that direction. You see, the Japanese have a saying: "Do not sleep with your feet pointed towards your benefactor."

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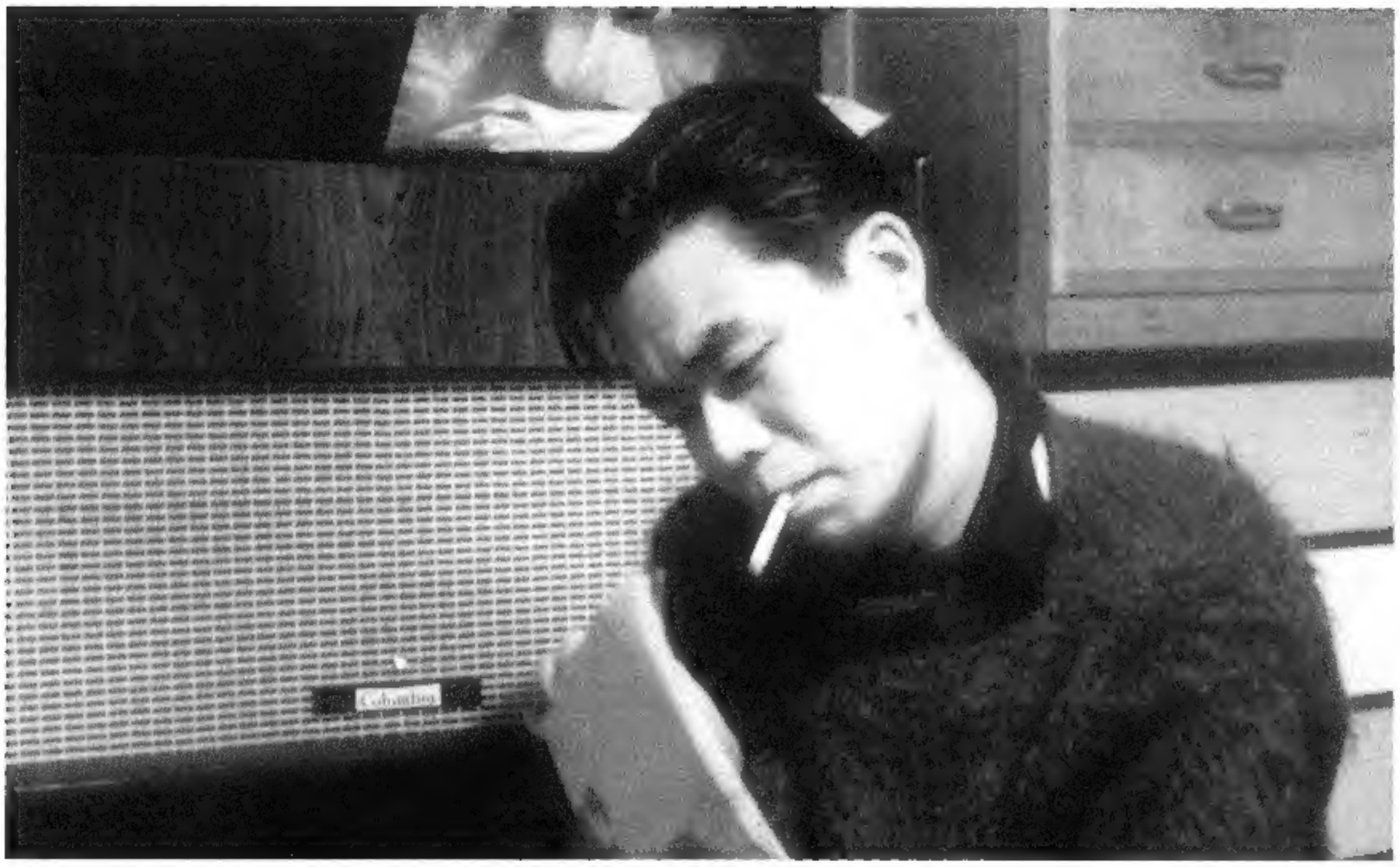
[3]Originally published in 1972, "Good–Bye" is perhaps Tatsumi's most well–known story. It will be included in a future volume in this series.



Yoshihiro Tatsumi, circa 1970